THE MAGAZINE OF

Fantasy AND Science Fiction

A MERCURY PUBLICATION

SPECIAL SUMMER ISSUE

JULY

40¢

CANTATA 140

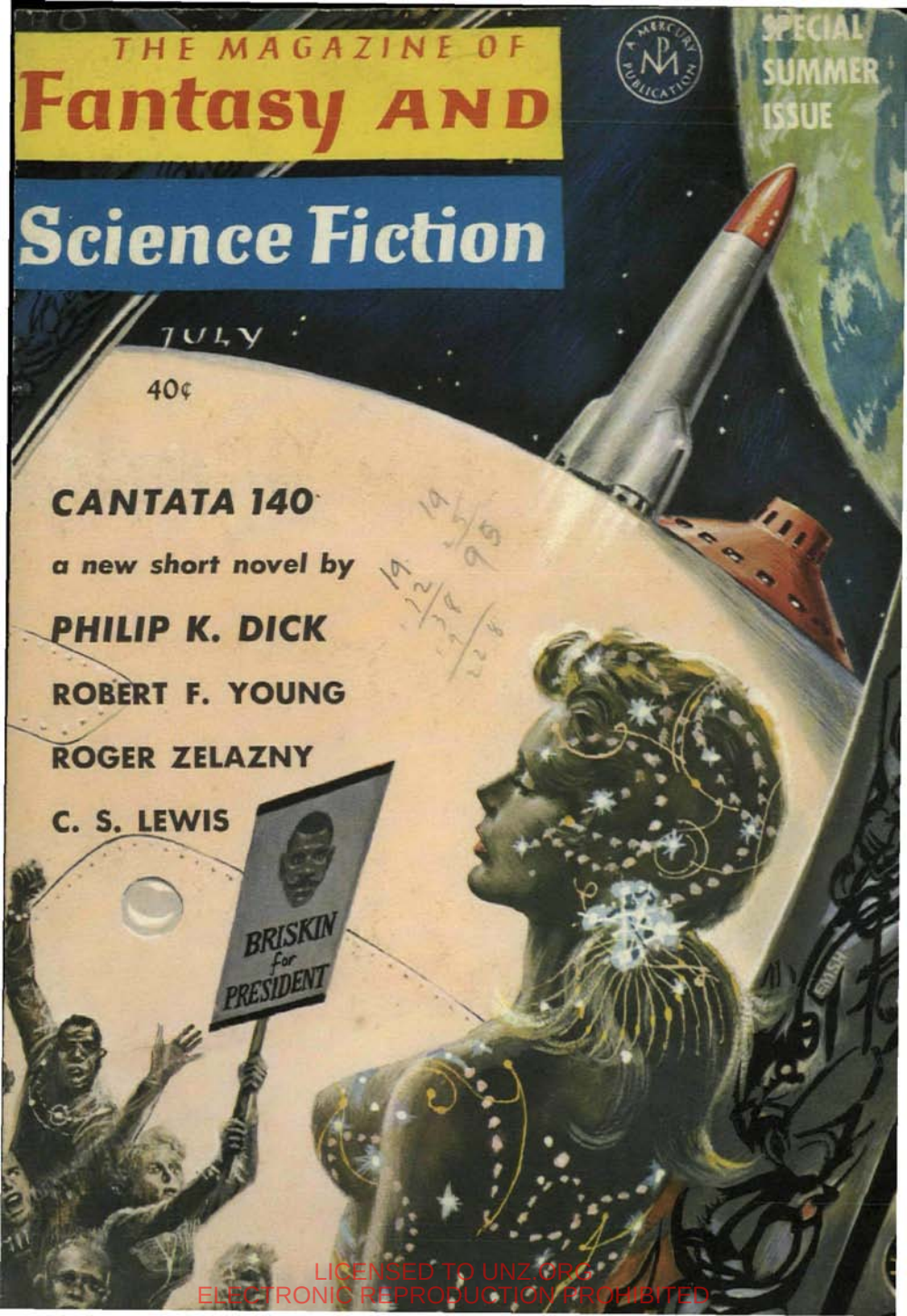
a new short novel by

PHILIP K. DICK

ROBERT F. YOUNG

ROGER ZELAZNY

C. S. LEWIS



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fantasy and Science Fiction

JULY *Including Venture Science Fiction*

Cantata 140 (*short novel*)	PHILIP K. DICK	5
The Second Philadelphia Experiment	ROBERT F. YOUNG	62
Balloon Astronomy	HEODORE L. THOMAS	66
The Scientist and the Monster	GAHAN WILSON	67
The Happy Place	TONI HELLER LAMB	68
Books	AVRAM DAVIDSON	71
The End of the Wine (*verse*)	C. S. LEWIS	74
The Salvation of Faust	ROGER ZELAZNY	76
All-Hallows (*verse*)	LEAH BODINE DRAKE	79
Science: Nothing Counts	ISAAC ASIMOV	80
The Struldbrugg Reaction	JOHN SUTHERLAND	91
The Girl With the 100 Proof Eyes	RON WEBB	109
We Serve the Star of Freedom	JANE BEAUCLERK	114
F&SF Marketplace		129

Cover by Ed Emsh (illustrating "Cantata 140")

Joseph W. Ferman, PUBLISHER *Avram Davidson,* EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Isaac Asimov, SCIENCE EDITOR *Edward L. Ferman,* MANAGING EDITOR

Ted White, ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Volume 27, No. 1, Whole No. 158, July 1964. Published monthly by Mercury Press, Inc., at 40¢ a copy. Annual subscription $4.50; $5.00 in Canada and the Pan American Union; $5.50 in all other countries. Publication office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, N. H. Editorial and general mail should be sent to 347 East 53rd St., New York, N. Y. 10022. Second Class postage paid at Concord, N. H. Printed in U.S.A.

© 1964 by Mercury Press, Inc. All rights, including translations into other languages, reserved. Submissions must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes; the Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A lusty young man's adventures in the Dark Ages—400 years in the future!

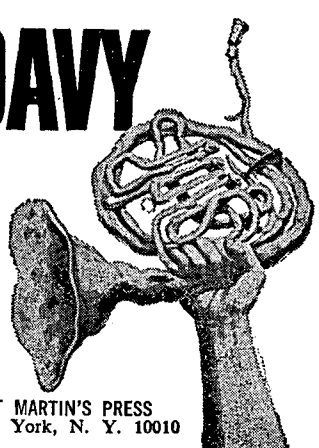
"Despite the poetically magnificent language (including the uninhibited vulgarity and the unabashed sexuality) which makes this an almost exuberant book to read, it nevertheless is one which you put down almost with tears in your eyes. I say 'almost' only because us sophisticated jerks aren't supposed to be moved in such a fashion."—GROFF CONKLIN

"... chilling and fascinating ... highly entertaining and delightful reading."—*Hartford Courant*

"Surprising, provocative ... It is plotted not with contrivances, but mercilessly with things which can happen."—THEODORE STURGEON, *National Review* $4.95

A novel by EDGAR PANGBORN

DAVY



ST MARTIN'S PRESS
New York, N. Y. 10010

The new Heinlein!

Three-time winner of the Hugo Award, "America's acknowledged master of science fiction" (*Chicago Tribune*) now tells the story of a civilization evolving in a huge spaceship lost between the stars. $3.50

Also by Robert A. Heinlein

GLORY ROAD	$3.95
PODKAYNE OF MARS	$3.50
STARSHIP TROOPERS	$3.95
STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND	$4.95

AT ALL BOOKSTORES OR FROM

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
200 Madison Ave., N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Presidency of the United States is unique not only in being the most important office in the world to be filled by election based on popular suffrage, but certainly this aspect of it is of the utmost importance. The late John F. Kennedy was the first president not to be of the predominant, or Protestant, religion; and the almost complete absence of this issue during his tragically short time in office indicates that—in this particular aspect of it, at any rate—the matter may never be an issue again. It is doubtful, too, that the ancestral origin of a potential president would be considered of prime importance, even if he were not (as all presidents so far have been) of British descent . . . provided that he were nevertheless of Western European extraction. Still, nothing stands still. The Congress, at my last count, included five Negroes, one Sikh, and one each of Chinese and Japanese descent. Suppose one of these, or one of their same ethnic groups, should —not now, but tomorrow or the day after—decide to run for the office of first magistrate of our republic? His origin might still be an issue—but it might not perhaps be the most important issue. Overpopulation might be one. Sexual morality might be another. This story by the author of the fascinating and HUGO-winning novel, The Man In The High Castle, *was written before murder laid its hand again on an American chief of state.*

CANTATA 140

by Philip K. Dick

CHAPTER ONE

THE YOUNG COUPLE, BLACK-haired, dark-skinned, probably Mexican or Puerto Rican, stood nervously at Herb Lackmore's counter and the boy, the husband, said in a low voice, "Sir, we want to be put to sleep. We want to become bibs."

Rising from his desk, Lackmore walked to the counter and although he did not like Cols—there seemed to be more of them every month, coming into his Oakland branch office of the U.S. Department on Special Public Welfare—he said in a pleasant tone of voice designed to reassure the two of them, "Have you thought it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over carefully, folks? It's a big step. You might be out for, say, a few hundred years. Have you shopped for any *professional* advice about this?"

The boy, glancing at his wife, swallowed and murmured, "No, sir. We just decided between us. Neither of us can get a job and we're about to be evicted from our dorm. We don't even own a wheel, and what can you do without a wheel? You can't go anywhere. You can't even look for work." He was not a bad-looking boy, Lackmore noticed. Possibly eighteen, he still wore the coat and trousers which were army-separation issue. The girl had long hair; she was quite small, with black, bright eyes and a delicately-formed almost doll-like face. She never ceased watching her husband.

"I'm going to have a baby," the girl blurted.

"Aw, the heck with both of you," Lackmore said in disgust, drawing his breath in sharply. "You both get right out of here."

Ducking their heads guiltily the boy and his wife turned and started from Lackmore's office, back outside onto the busy downtown early-morning Oakland, California street.

"Go see an abort-consultant!" Lackmore called after them, his advice coming from him irritably. He resented having to help them, but obviously someone had to; look at the spot they had gotten themselves into. Because no doubt they were living on a government military pension, and naturally if the girl was pregnant the pension would automatically be withdrawn.

Plucking hesitantly at the sleeve of his wrinkled coat the Col boy said, "Sir, how do we find an abort-consultant?"

The ignorance of the dark-skinned strata, despite the government's ceaseless educational campaigns. No wonder their women were often preg. "Look in the phone book," Lackmore said. "Under *abortionists, therapeutic.* Then the subsection *advisors.* Got it?"

"Yes sir. Thank you." The boy nodded rapidly.

"Can you read?"

"Yes. I stayed in school until I was thirteen." On the boy's face fierce pride showed; his black eyes gleamed.

Lackmore returned to reading his homeopape; he did not have any more time to offer gratis. No wonder they wanted to become bibs. Preserved, unchanged, in a government warehouse, year after year, until—would the labor market ever improve? Lackmore personally doubted it, and he had been around a long time; he was ninety-five years old, a *jerry.* In his time he had put to sleep thousands of people, almost all of them, like this couple, young. And —dark.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The door of the office shut. The young couple had gone again as quietly as they had come.

Sighing, Lackmore began to read once more the pape's article on the divorce trial of Lurton D. Sands, Jr., the most sensational event now taking place; as always he read every word of it avidly.

This day began for Darius Pethel with vidphone calls from irate customers wanting to know why their Jiffi-scuttlers hadn't been fixed. Any time now, he told them soothingly, and hoped that Erickson was already at work in the service department of Pethel Jiffi-scuttler Sales & Service.

As soon as he was off the vidphone Pethel searched among the litter on his desk for the day's copy of *U.S. Business Report*; he of course kept abreast of all the economic developments on the planet. This alone set him above his employees; this, his wealth, and his advanced age.

"What's it say?" his salesman Stu Hadley asked, standing in the office doorway, robant magnetic broom in hand, pausing in his activity.

Silently, Pethel read the major headline.

EFFECTS ON THE NATION'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY OF A NEGRO PRESIDENT

And there, in 3-D, animated, was a pic of James Briskin; the pic came to life, candidate Briskin smiled in miniature, as Pethel pressed the tab beneath it. The Negro's mustache-obscured lips moved and above his head a balloon appeared, filled with the words he was saying.

My first task will be to find an equitable disposition of the tens of millions of sleeping

"And dump every last bib back on the labor market," Pethel murmured, releasing the word tab. "If this guy gets in the nation's ruined." But it was inevitable. Sooner or later there would be a Negro president; after all, since the Event of 1993 there had been more Cols than Caucs.

Gloomily, he turned to page two for the latest on the Lurton Sands scandal; maybe that would cheer him up, the political news being so bad. The famous orgtrans surgeon had become involved in a sensational contested divorce suit with his equally famous wife Myra, the abort-consultant. All sorts of juicy details were beginning to filter out, charges on both sides. Dr. Sands, according to the homeopapes, had a mistress; that was why Myra had stomped out, and rightly so. Not like the old days, Pethel thought, recalling his youth in the late decades of the twentieth century. Now it was 2080 and public—and private—morality had worsened.

Why would Dr. Sands want a mistress anyhow, Pethel wondered,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when there's that Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite passing overhead every day? They say there're five thousand girls to choose from.

He, himself, had never visited Thisbe Olt's satellite; he did not approve of it, nor did very many *jerries*—it was too radical a solution to the overpopulation problem, and seniors, by letter and telegram, had fought its passage in Congress back in '72. But the bill had gone through anyhow . . . probably, he reflected, because most Congressmen had the idea of taking a jet'ab up there themselves. And no doubt regularly did, now.

"If we whites stick together—" Hadley began.

"Listen," Pethel said, *"that time has passed.* If Briskin can dispose of the bibs, more power to him; personally it keeps me awake at night, thinking of all those people, most of them just kids, lying in those gov warehouses year after year. Look at the talent going to waste. It's—bureaucratic! Only a swollen socialist government would have dreamed up a solution like that." He eyed his salesman harshly. "If you hadn't gotten this job with me, even you might—"

Hadley interrupted quietly, "But I'm white."

Reading on further Pethel saw that Thisbe Olt's satellite had grossed a billion U.S. dollars in 2079. Wow, he said to himself. That's big business. Before him was a pic of Thisbe; with cadmium-white hair and little high conical breasts she was a superb sight, an asthetic as well as a sexual treat. The pic showed her serving male guests of her satellite a tequila sour—an added fillip because tequila, being derived from the mescal plant, had long been illegal on Earth proper.

Pethel touched the word tab of Thisbe's pic and at once Thisbe's eyes sparkled, her head turned, her stable, dense breasts vibrated subtly, and in the balloon above her head the proper words formed.

Embarrassing personal urgency, Mr. American businessman? Do as many doctors recommend: visit my Golden Door!

It was an ad, Pethel discovered. Not an informative article.

"Excuse me." A customer had entered the store and Hadley moved in his direction.

Oh lord, Darius Pethel thought as he recognized the customer. Don't we have his 'scuttler fixed *yet*? He rose to his feet, knowing that he personally would be needed to appease the man; this was Dr. Lurton Sands, and due to his recent domestic troubles he had become, of late, demanding and hot-tempered.

"Yes, doctor," Pethel said, walking toward him. "What can I do for you today?" As if he didn't know. Trying to fight off Myra as well as keep his mistress, Cally

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vale, Dr. Sands had enough problems; he really needed the use of his Jiffi-scuttler. Unlike other customers it was not going to be possible to put this man off.

Plucking by reflex at his great handlebar mustache, presidential candidate Jim Briskin said tentatively, "We're in a rut, Sal. I ought to fire you. You're trying to make me out the epitome of the Cols and yet you know I've spent twenty years playing up to the white power structure. Frankly I think we'd have better luck trying to get the white vote, not the dark. I'm used to them; I can appeal to them."

"You're wrong," his campaign manager Salisbury Heim said. "Your appeal—listen and understand this, Jim—is to the dark kid and his wife scared to death their only prospect is winding up bibs in some gov warehouse. 'Bottled in bond,' as they say. In you these people see—"

"But I feel guilty."

"Why?" Sal Heim demanded.

"Because I'm a fake. I can't close the Dept of SPW warehouses; you know that. You got me to promise, and ever since I've been sweating my life away trying to conceive how it could be done. And there isn't any way." He examined his wristwatch; one quarter hour remained before he had to give his speech. "Have you read the speech Phil Danville wrote for me?" He reached into his disorganized, lumpy coat-pouch.

"Danville!" Heim's face convulsed. "I thought you got rid of him; give me that." He grabbed the folded sheets and began going over them. "Danville is a nut. Look." He waved the first sheet in Jim Briskin's face. "According to him you're going to ban traffic from the U.S. to Thisbe's satellite. That's insane! If the Golden Door is closed the birth rate will jump back up again where it was—what then? How does Danville manage to counter that?"

After a pause Briskin said, "The Golden Door is immoral."

Spluttering, Heim said, "Sure. And animals should wear pants."

"There's just got to be a better solution than that satellite."

Heim lapsed into silence as he read further into the speech. "And he has you advocate this outmoded, thoroughly discredited planet-wetting technique of Bruno Mini." He tossed the papers into Jim Briskin's lap. "So what do you wind up with? You back a planetary colonization scheme tried twenty years ago and abandoned; you advocate closing the Golden Door satellite—you'll be popular, Jim, after tonight. But popular with whom, though? Just answer me; who is this aimed at?" He waited.

There was silence.

"You know what I think?" Heim said presently. "I think this

LIBRARY TOMIZORK
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is your elaborate way of giving up. Of saying to hell with the whole thing. It's how you shed responsibility; I saw you start to do the same thing at the convention in that crazy doomsday speech you gave, that morbid curiosity that still has everyone baffled. But fortunately you'd already been nominated. It was too late for the convention to repudiate you."

Briskin said, "I expressed my real convictions in that speech."

"What, that civilization is now doomed because of this overpopulation biz? Some convictions for the first Col President to have." Heim got to his feet and walked to the window; he stood looking out at downtown Philadelphia, at the jet-copters landing, the runnels of auto-cars and ramps of footers coming and going, into and out of every high rise building in sight. "I once in a while think," Heim said in a low voice, "that you feel it's doomed because it's nominated a Negro and may elect him; it's a way of putting yourself down."

"No," Briskin said, with calm; his long face remained unruffled.

"I'll tell you what to say in your speech for tonight," Heim said, his back to Briskin. "First, you once more describe your relationship with Frank Woodbine, because people go for space explorers; Woodbine is a hero, much more so than you or what's-his-name. You know; the man you're running against. The S.R.C.D. incumbent."

"William Schwarz."

Heim nodded exaggeratedly. "Yes, you're right. Then after you gas about Woodbine—and we show a few shots of you and him standing together on various planets—then you make a joke about Dr. Sands."

"No," Briskin said.

"Why not? Is Sands a sacred cow? You can't touch him?"

Jim Briskin said slowly, painstakingly, "Because Sands is a great doctor and shouldn't be ridiculed in the media the way he is right now."

"He saved your brother's life. By finding him a wet new spleen just in the nick of time. Or he saved your mother just when—"

"Sands has preserved hundreds, thousands, of people. Including plenty of Cols. Whether they were able to pay or not." Briskin was silent a moment and then he added, "Also I met his wife Myra and I didn't like her. Years ago I went to her; I had made a girl preg and we wanted abort advice."

"Good!" Heim said violently. "We can use that. You made a girl pregnant—that, when Nonovulid is free for the asking; that shows you're a provident type, Jim." He tapped his forehead. "You think ahead."

"I now have five minutes," Briskin said woodenly. He gathered up the pages of Phil Danville's speech and returned them to his inside coat pouch; he still wore a formal

LICENSED TO ANYONE
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dark suit even in hot weather. That, and a flaming red wig, had been his trademark back in the days when he had telecast as a TV newsclown.

"Give that speech," Heim said, "and you're politically dead. And if you're—" He broke off. The door to the room had opened and his wife Patricia stood there.

"Sorry to bother you," Pat said. "But everyone out here can hear you yelling." Heim caught a glimpse, then, of the big outside room full of teen-age Briskinettes, uniformed young volunteers who had come from all over the country to help elect the Republican-Liberal candidate.

"Sorry," Heim murmured.

Pat entered the room and shut the door after her. "I think Jim's right, Sal." Small, gracefully-built —she had once been a dancer— Pat lithely seated herself and lit a cigar. "The more naive Jim appears the better." She blew gray smoke from between her luminous, pale lips. "He still has a lingering reputation for being cynical. Whereas he should be another Wendell Wilkie."

"Wilkie lost," Heim pointed out.

"And Jim may lose," Pat said; she tossed her head, brushing back her long hair from her eyes. "But if he does he can run again and win next time. The important thing is for him to appear sensitive and innocent, a sweet person who takes the world's suffering on his own shoulders because he's made that way. He can't help it; he has to suffer. You see?"

"Amateurs," Heim said, and groaned.

The TV cameras stood inert, as the seconds passed, but they were ready to begin; the time for the speech lay just ahead as Jim Briskin sat at the small desk which he employed when addressing the people. Before him, near at hand, rested Phil Danville's speech. He had still not made up his mind about Danville's speech and he sat meditating as the TV technicians prepared for the recording.

The speech would be beamed to the Republican-Liberal Party's satellite relay station and from it telecast repeatedly until saturation point had been achieved. States Rights Conservative Democrat attempts to jam it would probably fail, because of the enormous signal-strength of the R-L satellite. The message would get through despite Tompkin's Act, which permitted jamming of political material. And, simultaneously, Schwarz' speech would be jammed in return; it was scheduled for release at the same time.

Across from him sat Patricia Heim, lost in a cloud of nervous introspection. And, in the control room, he caught a glimpse of Sal, busy with the TV engineers, making certain that the image recorded would be flattering.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And, off in a corner by himself, sat Phil Danville. No one talked to Danville; the party bigwigs, passing in and out of the studio, astutely ignored his existence.

A technician nodded to Jim. Time to begin his speech.

"It's very popular these days," Jim Briskin said to the TV camera, "to make fun of the old dreams and schemes for planetary colonization. How could people have been so nutty? Trying to live in completely inhuman environments . . . on worlds never designed for Homo sapiens. And it's amusing that they tried for decades to alter these hostile environments to meet human needs—and naturally failed." He spoke slowly, almost drawlingly; he took his time. He had the attention of the nation and he meant to make thorough use of it. "So now we're looking for a planet ready-made, another 'Venus,' or more accurately what Venus specifically never was. What we had *hoped* it would be: lush, moist and verdant and productive, a Garden of Eden just waiting for us to show up."

Reflexively, Patricia Heim smoked her El Producto alta cigar, never taking her eyes from him.

"Well," Jim Briskin said, "we'll never find it. And if we do, it'll be too late. Too small, too late, too far away. If we want another Venus, a planet we can colonize, *we'll have to manufacture it ourselves.* We can laugh ourselves sick at Bruno Mini, but the fact is, he was right."

In the control room Sal Heim stared at him in gross anguish. He had done it. Sanctioned Mini's abandoned scheme of recasting the ecology of another world. Madness revisited.

The camera clicked off.

Turning his head, Jim Briskin saw the expression on Sal Heim's face. He had been cut off there in the control room; Sal had given the order.

"You're not going to let me finish?" Jim said.

Sal's voice, amplified, boomed, "No, goddam it. No!"

Standing up, Pat called back, "You have to. He's the candidate. If he wants to hang himself, let him."

Also on his feet, Danville said hoarsely, "If you cut him off again I'll spill it publicly. I'll leak the entire thing, how you're working him like a puppet!" He started at once toward the door of the studio; he was leaving. Evidently he meant what he had said.

Jim Briskin said, "You better turn it back on, Sal. They're right; you have to let me talk." He did not feel angry, only impatient. His desire was to continue, nothing else. "Come on, Sal," he said quietly. "I'm waiting."

The party brass and Sal Heim, in the control room, conferred.

"He'll give in," Pat said to Jim Briskin. "I know Sal." Her face

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was expressionless; she did not enjoy this but she intended to endure it.

"Right," Jim agreed, nodding.

"But will you watch a playback of the speech, Jim?" She said. "For Sal's sake. Just to be sure you intend what you say."

"Sure," he said. He had meant to anyhow.

Sal Heim's voice boomed from the wall speaker, "Damn your black Col hide, Jim!"

Grinning, Jim Briskin waited, seated at his desk, his arms folded.

The red light of the centra camera clicked back on.

CHAPTER TWO

AFTER THE SPEECH JIM BRISKIN's press secretary, Dorothy Gill, collared him in the corridor. "Mr. Briskin, you asked me yesterday to find out if Bruno Mini is still alive. He is, after a fashion." Miss Gill examined her notes. "He's a buyer for a dried fruit company in Sacramento, California, now. Evidently Mini's entirely given up his planet-wetting career, but your speech just now will probably bring him back to his old grazing ground."

"Possibly not," Briskin said. "Mini may not like the idea of a Col taking up his ideas and propagandizing them. Thanks, Dorothy."

Coming up beside him Sal Heim shook his head and said, "Jim, you just don't have political instinct."

Shrugging, Jim Briskin said, "Possibly you're right." He was in that sort of mood, now; he felt passive and depressed. In any case the damage had been done; the speech was on tape and already being relayed to the R-L satellite. His review of it had been cursory at best.

"I heard what Dotty said," Sal said. "That Mini character will be showing up here now; we'll have him to contend with, along with all our other problems. Anyhow, how about a drink?"

"Okay," Jim Briskin agreed. "Wherever you say. Lead the way."

"May I join you?" Patricia said, appearing beside her husband.

"Sure," Sal said. He put his arm around her and hugged her. "A good big tall one, full of curiously-refreshing tiny little bubbles that last all through the drink. Just what women like."

As they stepped out onto the sidewalk, Jim Briskin saw a picket —two of them, in fact—carrying signs.

KEEP THE
WHITE HOUSE WHITE.
LET'S KEEP AMERICA CLEAN!

The two pickets, both young Caucs, stared at him and he and Sal and Patricia stared at them. No one spoke. Several homeopape camera men snapped pics; their flashbulbs lit the static scene starkly for an instant and then Sal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Patricia, with Jim Briskin following, started on. The two pickets continued to pace back and forth along their little routes.

"The bastards," Pat said as the three of them seated themselves at a booth in the cocktail lounge across the street from the TV studio.

Jim Briskin said, "It's their job. God evidently meant them to do that." It did not particularly bother him; in one form or another it had been a part of his life as long as he could remember.

"But Schwarz agreed to keep race and religion out of the election," Pat said.

"Bill Schwarz did," Jim Briskin said, "but Verne Engel didn't. And it's Engel who runs CLEAN, not the S.R.C.D. Party."

"I know darn well the S.R.C.D. pays money to keep CLEAN solvent," Sal murmured. "Without their support it'd fold in a day."

"I don't agree with you," Briskin said. "I think there'll always be a hate organization like CLEAN and there'll always be people to support it." After all, CLEAN had a point; they did not want to see a Negro President, and wasn't it their right to feel like that? Some people did, some people didn't; that was perfectly natural. And, he thought, why should we pretend that race is not the issue? It is, really. I am a Negro. Verne Engel is factually correct. The real question was: how large a percentage of the electorate supported CLEAN's views? Certainly, CLEAN did not hurt his feelings; he could not be wounded: he had experienced too much already in his years as a newsclown. In my years, he thought to himself acidly, as an American Negro.

A small boy, white, appeared at the booth with a pen and tablet of paper. "Mr. Briskin, can I get your autograph?"

Jim signed and the boy darted off to join his parents at the door of the tavern. The couple, well-dressed, young and obviously upper stratum, waved at him cheerily. "We're with you!" the man called.

"Thanks," Jim said, nodding to them and trying—but not successfully—to sound cheery in return.

"You're in a mood," Pat commented.

He nodded. Mutely.

"Think of all those people with lily-white skins," Sal said, "who're going to vote for a Col. My, my. It's encouraging. Proves not all of us Whites are bad down underneath."

"Did I ever say you were?" Jim asked.

"No, but you really think that. You don't really trust any of us."

"Where'd you drag that up from?" Jim demanded, angry now.

"What're you going to do?" Sal said. "Slash me with your electrographic magnetic razor?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pat said sharply, "What are you doing, Sal? Why are you talking to Jim like that?" She peered about nervously. "Suppose someone overheard."

"I'm trying to jerk him out of his depression," Sal said. "I don't like to see him give it to them. Those CLEAN pickets upset him but he doesn't recognize it or feel it consciously." He eyed Jim. "I've heard you say it many times. 'I can't be hurt.' Hell, you sure can. You were hurt just now. You want everyone to love you, White and Col both. I don't know how you ever got into politics in the first place. You should have stayed a newsclown, delighting young and old. Especially the *very* young."

Jim said, "I want to help the human race."

"By changing the ecology of the planets? Are you serious?"

"If I'm voted into office I actually intend to appoint Bruno Mini, without even having met him, director of the space program; I'm going to give him the chance they never let him have, even when they—"

"If you get elected," Pat said, "you can pardon Dr. Sands."

"Pardon him?" He glanced at her, disconcerted. "He's not being tried; he's being divorced."

"You haven't heard the rumes?" Pat said. "His wife is going to dig up something criminal he's done so she can dispatch him and obtain their total property. No one knows what it is yet but she's hinted—"

"I don't want to hear," Jim Briskin said.

"You may be right," Pat said thoughtfully. "The Sands divorce is turning nasty; it might backfire if you mentioned it, as Sal wants you to. The mistress, Cally Vale, has disappeared, possibly murdered. Maybe you do have an instinct, Jim. Maybe you don't need us after all."

"I need you," Jim said, "but not to embroil me in Dr. Sands' marital problems." He sipped his drink.

Rick Erickson, repairman for Pethel Jiffi-scuttler Sales & Service, lit a cigarette, tipped his stool back by pushing with his bony knees against his work bench. Before him rested the master turret of a defective jiffi-scuttler. The one, in fact, which belonged to Dr. Lurton Sands.

There had always been bugs in the 'scuttlers. The first one put in use had broken down; years ago, that had been, but the 'scuttlers remained basically the same now as then.

Historically, the original defective 'scuttler had belonged to an employee of Terran Development named Henry Ellis. After the fashion of humans Ellis had not reported the defect to his employers . . . or so Rick recalled. It had been before his time but myth persisted, an incredible legend,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

still current among 'scuttler repairmen, that through the defect in his 'scuttler Ellis had—it was hard to believe—composed the Holy Bible.

The principle underlying the operation of the 'scuttlers was a limited form of time travel. Along the tube of his 'scuttler—it was said—Ellis had found a weak point, a shimmer, at which another continuum completely had been visible. He had stooped down and witnessed a gathering of tiny persons who yammered in speeded-up voices and scampered about in their world just beyond the wall of the tube.

Who were these people? Initially, Ellis had not known, but even so he had engaged in commerce with them; he had accepted sheets—astonishingly thin and tiny—of questions, taken the questions to language-decoding equipment at TD, then, once the foreign script of the tiny people had been translated, taking the questions to one of the corporation's big computers to get them answered. Then back to the Linguistics Department and at last at the end of the day, back up the tube of the Jiffi-scuttler to hand to the tiny people the answers—in their own language—to their questions.

Evidently, if you believed this, Ellis had been a charitable man.

However, Ellis had supposed that this was a non-Terran race dwelling on a miniature planet in some other system entirely. He was wrong. According to the legend the tiny people were from Earth's own past; the script, of course, had been ancient Hebrew. Whether this had really happened Rick did not pretend to know, but in any case for *some* breach of company rules Ellis had been fired by RD and had long since disappeared. Perhaps he had emigrated; who knew? Who cared? TD's job was to patch the thin spot in the tube and see that the defect did not reoccur in subsequent 'scuttlers.

All at once the intercom at the end of Rick's workbench blared. "Hey Erickson." It was Pethel's voice. "Dr. Sands is up here asking about his 'scuttler. When'll it be ready?"

With the handle of a screwdriver Rick Erickson savagely tapped the master turret of Dr. Sands' 'scuttler. I better go upstairs and talk to Sands, he reflected. I mean, this is driving me crazy. It *can't* malfunction the way he claims.

Two steps at a time, Rick Erickson ascended to the main floor. There, at the front door, a man was just leaving; it was Sands—Erickson recognized him from the homeopape pics. He hurried, reached him outside on the sidewalk.

"Listen, doc—how come you say your 'scuttler dumps you off in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Portland, Oregon and places like that? It just can't; it isn't built that way!"

They stood facing each other. Dr. Sands, well-dressed, lean and slightly balding, with deeply tanned skin and a thin, tapered nose, regarded him complexly, cautious about answering. He looked smart, very smart.

So this is the man they're all writing about, Erickson said to himself. Carries himself better than the rest of us and has a suit made from Martian mole cricket hide. But—he felt irritation. Dr. Sands in general had a helpless manner; good-looking, in his mid forties, he had an easy-going, bewildered geniality about him, as if unable to deal with or comprehend the forces which had overtaken him. Erickson could see that; Dr. Sands had a crushed quality, still stunned.

And yet Sands remained a gentleman. In a quiet, reasonable tone he said, "But that's what it seems to do. I wish I could tell you more but I'm not mechanically inclined." He smiled, a thoroughly disarming smile that made Erickson ashamed of his own gruffness.

"Aw hell," Erickson said, backtracking. "It's the fault of TD—they could have ironed the bugs out of the 'scuttlers years ago. Too bad you got a lemon." You look like a not too bad guy, he reflected.

" 'A lemon.' " Dr. Sands echoed. "Yes, that sums it up." His face twisted; he seemed amused. "Well, that's my luck. Everything has been running like this for me, lately."

"Maybe I could get TD to take it back," Erickson said. "And swap you another one for it."

"No." Dr. Sands shook his head vigorously. "I want that particular one." His tone had become firm; he meant what he said.

"Why?" Who would want to keep an admitted lemon? It didn't make sense. In fact the entire business had a wrong ring to it, and Erickson's keen faculties detected this—he had seen many, many customers in his time.

"Because it's mine," Sands said. "I picked it out originally." He started on, then, down the sidewalk.

"Don't give me that," Erickson said, half to himself.

Pausing, Sands said, "What?" He moved a step back, his face dark, now. The geniality had departed.

"Sorry. No offense." Erickson eyed Dr. Sands acutely. And did not like what he saw. Beneath the doctor's suavity there lay a coldness, something fixed and hard. This was no ordinary person and Erickson felt uneasy.

Dr. Sands said in a crisp voice, "Get it fixed and soon." He turned and strode on down the sidewalk, leaving Erickson standing there.

Jeez, Erickson said to himself,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and whistled. My busted back. I wouldn't want to tangle with *him*, he thought as he walked into the store.

Going downstairs a step at a time, hands thrust deep in his pockets, he thought, Maybe I'll stick it all back together and take a trip through it. He was again thinking of old Henry Ellis, the first man to receive a defective 'scuttler; he was recalling that Ellis had not wanted to give up his particular one, either. And for good reason.

Back in the service department basement once more, Rick seated himself at the work bench, picked up Dr. Sands' 'scuttler-turret and began to reassemble it. Presently he had expertly restored it to its place and had hooked it back into the circuit.

Now, he said to himself as he switched on the power field. Let's see where it gets us. He entered the big gleaming circular hoop which was the entrance of the 'scuttler, found himself—as usual—within a gray, formless tube which stretched in both directions. Framed in the opening behind him lay his work bench. And in front of him—

New York City. An unstable view of an industriously-active street corner which bordered Dr. Sands' office. And a wedge, beyond it, of the vast building itself, the high rise skyscraper of plastic—rexeroid compounds from Jupiter—with its infinitude of floors, endless windows . . . and, past that, monojets rising and descending from the ramps, along which the footers scurried in swarms so dense as to seem self-destructive. The largest city in the world, four-fifths of which lay subsurface; what he saw was only a meager fraction, a trace of its visible projections. No one in his lifetime, even a *jerry*, could view it all; the city was simply too extensive.

See? Erickson grumbled to himself. Your 'scuttler's working okay; this isn't Portland, Oregon—it's exactly what it's supposed to be.

Crouching down, Erickson ran an expert hand over the surface of the tube. Seeking—what? He didn't know. But something which would justify the doctor's insistance on retaining this particular 'scuttler.

He took his time. He was not in a hurry. And he intended to find what he was searching for.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PLANET-WETTING SPEECH which Jim Briskin delivered that night—taped earlier during the day and then beamed from the R.-L. satellite—was too painful for Salisbury Heim to endure. Therefore he took an hour off and sought relief as many men did: he boarded a jet'ab and shortly was on his way to the Golden Door

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moments of Bliss satellite. Let Jim blab away about Bruno Mini's crackpot engineering program, he said to himself as he rested in the rear seat of the rising 'ab, grateful for this interval of relaxation. Let him cut his own throat. But at least I don't have to be dragged down to defeat along with him; I'm tempted, sometime before election day, to cut myself loose and go over to the S.R.C.D. party.

Beyond doubt, Bill Schwarz would take him on. By an intricate route Heim had already sounded the opposition out. Schwarz had, through this careful, indirect linkage, expressed pleasure at the idea of Heim joining forces with him. However, Heim was not really ready to make his move; he had not pursued the topic further.

At least, not until today. This new, painful bombshell. And at a time when the party had troubles enough already.

The fact of the matter was—and he knew this from the latest polls—that Jim Briskin was trailing Schwarz. Despite the fact that he had all the Col vote, and that included non-Negro dark races such as the Puerto Ricans on the East Coast and the Mexicans on the West. It was not a shoo-in by any means. And why was Briskin trailing? Because all the Whites would be going to the polls, whereas only about sixty percent of the Cols would show up on election day. Incredibly, they were apathetic toward Jim. Perhaps they believed—and he had heard this said—that Jim had sold out to the White power structure. That he was not authentically a leader of the Col people as such. And in a sense this was true.

Because Jim Briskin represented Whites and Cols alike.

"We're there, sir," the 'ab driver, a Col, informed him. The 'ab slowed, came to rest on the breast-shaped vehicle port of the satellite, a dozen yards from the pink nipple which served as a location-signal device. "You're Jim Briskin's campaign manager?" the driver said, turning to face him. "Yeah, I recognize you. Listen, Mr. Heim; he's not a sell-out, is he? I heard a lot of folk argue that, but he wouldn't do it; I know that."

"Jim Briskin," Heim said as he dug for his wallet, "has sold out nobody. And never will. You can tell your buddies that because it's the truth." He paid his fare, feeling grumpy. Grumpy as hell.

"But is it true that—"

"He's working with Whites, yes. He's working with me and I'm White. So what? Are the Whites supposed to disappear when Briskin is elected? Is that what you want? Because if it is you're not going to get it."

"I see what you mean, I guess," the driver said, nodding slowly. "You infer he's for all the people; right? He's got the interest of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

White minority at heart just like he has the col Majority. He's going to protect even including you Whites."

"That's right," Salisbury Heim said, as he opened the 'ab door. "As you put it, 'even including you Whites.'" He stepped out on the pavement. Yes, even us, he said to himself. Because we merit it.

"Hello there, Mr. Heim." A woman's melodious voice. Heim turned—

"Thisbe," he said, pleased. "How are you?"

"I'm glad to see that you haven't stayed below just because your candidate disapproves of us," Thisbe Olt said. Archly, she raised her green-painted, shining eyebrows. Her narrow, harlequin-like face glinted with countless dots of pure light embedded within her skin; it gave her eerie, nimbus-like countenance the appearance of constantly-renewed beauty. And she had renewed herself, over a number of decades. Willowy, almost frail, she fiddled with a tassel of stone-impregnated fabric draped about her bare arms; she had put on gay clothes in order to come out and greet him, and he was gratified. He liked her very much—had for some time, now.

Guardedly, Sal Heim said, "What makes you think Jim Briskin has any bones to pick with the Golden Door, Thisbe? Has he ever actually said anything to that effect?" As far as he knew, Jim's opinions on that topic had not been made public; at least he had *tried* to keep them under wraps.

"We know these things, Sal," Thisbe said. "I think you'd better go inside and talk with George Walt about it; they're down on level C, in their office. They have a few things to say to you, Sal. I know because they've been discussing it."

Annoyed, Sal said, "I didn't come here—" But what was the use? If the owners of the Golden Door satellite wanted to see him it was undoubtedly advisable for him to come around. "Okay," he said, and followed Thisbe in the direction of the elevator.

It always distressed him—despite his efforts to the contrary—to find himself engaged in conversation with George Walt. They were a mutation of a special sort; he had never seen anything quite like them. Nonetheless, although handicapped, George Walt had risen to great economic power in this society. The Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite, it was rumored, was only one of their holdings; they were spread extensively over the financial map of the modern world. They were a form of mutated twinning, joined at the base of the skull so that a single cephalic structure served both separate bodies. Evidently the personality *George* inhabited one hemisphere of the brain, made use of one eye: the right, as he re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

called. And the personality *Walt* existed on the other side, distinct, with its own idiosyncrasies, views and drives—and its own eye from which to view the outside universe.

A uniformed attendant, a sort of cop, stopped Sal, as the elevator doors opened on level C.

"Mr. George Walt wanted to see me," Sal said. "Or so Miss Olt tells me, at least."

"This way, Mr. Heim," the uniformed attendant said, touching his cap respectfully and leading Sal down the carpeted, silent hall.

He was let into a large chamber—and there, on a couch, sat George Walt. Both bodies at once rose to their feet, supporting between them the common head. The head, containing the unmingled entities of the brothers, nodded in greeting and the mouth smiled. One eye—the left—regarded him steadily, while the other wandered vaguely off, as if preoccupied.

The two necks joined the head in such a way that the head and face were tilted slightly back. George Walt tended to look slightly over whomever they were talking to, and this added to the unique impression; it made them seem formidable, as if their attention could not really be engaged. The head was normal size, however, as were both bodies. The body to the left—Sal did not recall which of them it was—wore informal clothing, a cotton shirt and slacks, with sandals on the feet. The right hand body, however, was formally dressed in a single-breasted suit, tie and buttoned gray cape. And the hands of the right body were jammed deep into the trouser pockets, a stance which gave to it an aura of authority if not age; it seemed distinctly older than its twin.

"This is George," the head said, pleasantly. "How are you, Sal Heim? Good to see you." The left body extended its hand. Sal walked toward the two of them and gingerly shook hands. The right hand body, Walt, did not want to shake with him; its hands remained in its pockets.

"This is Walt," the head said, less pleasantly, then. "We wanted to discuss your candidate with you, Heim. Sit down and have a drink. Here, what can we fix for you?" Together, the two bodies managed to walk to the sideboard, where an elaborate bar could be seen. Walt's hands opened a bottle of Bourbon while George's expertly fixed an Old Fashioned, mixed sugar and water and bitters together in the bottom of a glass. Together, George Walt made the drink and carried it back to Sal.

"Thanks," Sal Heim said, accepting the drink.

"This is Walt," the common head said to him. "We know that if Jim Briskin is elected he'll instruct his Attorney General to find

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ways to shut the satellite down. Isn't that a fact?" The two eyes, together now, fixed themselves on him in an intense, astute gaze.

"I don't know where you heard *that*," Sal said, evasively.

"This is Walt," the head said. "There's a leak in your organization; that's where we heard it. You realize what this means. We'll have to throw our support behind Schwarz. And you know how many transmissions we make to Earth in a single day."

Sal sighed. The Golden Door kept a perpetual stream of junk, honky-tonk stag-type shows, pouring down over a variety of channels, available to and widely watched by almost everyone in the country. The shows, especially the climactic orgy in which Thisbe herself—with her famous display of expanding and contracting muscles working in twenty directions simultaneously and in four colors—so to speak appeared, were a come-on for the activity of the satellite. But it would be duck soup to work in an anti-Briskin bias; the satellite's announcers were slick pros.

Downing his drink he rose and started toward the door. "Go ahead and sick your stag shows on Jim; we'll win the election anyhow and then you can be *sure* he'll shut you. In fact I personally guarantee it right now."

The head looked uneasy. "Dirty p-pool," it stammered.

Sal shrugged. "I'm just protecting the interests of my client; you've been making threats toward him. You started it, both of you."

"This is George," the head said rapidly. "Here's what I think we ought to have. Listen to this, Walt. We want Jim Briskin to come up here to the Golden Door and be photographed publically." It added, in applause for itself, "Good idea. Get it, Sal? Briskin arrives here, covered by all the media, and visits one of the girls; it'll be good for his image because it'll show he's a normal guy—and not some creep. So you benefit from this. And, while he's here, Briskin compliments us." It added, "A good final touch but optional. For instance he says the national interest has—"

"He'll never do it," Sal said. "He'll lose the election first."

The head said plaintively, "We'll give him any girl he wants; my lord, we have five thousand to choose from!"

"No luck," Sal Heim said. "Now, if you were to make that offer to me I'd take you up on it in a second. But not Jim. He's—old-fashioned." That was as good a way to put it as any. "He's a Puritan. You can call him a remnant of the twentieth century, if you want."

"Or nineteenth," the head said, venomously.

"Say anything you want," Sal said, nodding. "Jim won't care. He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

knows what he believes in; he thinks the satellite is—undignified. The way it's all handled up here, boom, boom, boom—mechanically, with no personal touch, no meeting of humans on a human basis. You run an autofac; I don't object and most people don't object, because it saves time. But Jim does because he's sentimental."

Two right arms gestured at Sal menacingly as the head said loudly, "The hell with that! We're as sentimental up here as you can get! We play background music in every room—the girls always learn the customer's first name and they're *required* to call him by that and nothing else! How sentimental can you get, for chrissakes? What do you *want*?" In a higher-pitched voice it roared on, "A marriage ceremony before and then a divorce procedure afterward, so it constitutes a legal marriage, is that it? Or do you want us to teach the girls to sew and wear mother hubbards and bloomers, and you pay to see their ankles and that's it? Listen, Sal." Its voice dropped a tone, became ominous and deadly. "Listen, Sal Heim," it repeated. "We know our business; don't tell us our business and we won't tell you yours. Starting tonight our TV announcers are going to insert a plug for Schwarz in every telecast to Earth, right in the middle of the glorious chef-d'oeuvre you-know-what where the girls . . . well, you know. Yes, I mean *that* part. And we're going to make a campaign out of this, really put it over. We're going to insure Bill Schwarz' reelection." It added, "And insure that Col frink's thorough, total defeat."

Sal said nothing. The great carpeted office was silent.

"No response from you, Sal? You're going to sit idly by?"

"I came up here to visit a girl I like," Sal said. "Sparky Rivers, her name is. I'd like to see her now." He felt weary. "She's different from all the others . . . at least all I've tried." Rubbing his forehead he murmured, "No, I'm too tired, now. I've changed my mind. I'll just leave."

"If she's as good as you say," the head said, "it won't require any energy from you." It laughed in appreciation of its wit. "Send a fray named Sparky Rivers down here," it instructed, pressing a button on its desk.

Sal Heim nodded dully. There was something to that. And after all, this *was* what he had come here for, this ancient, appreciated remedy.

"You're working too hard," the head said acutely. "What's the matter, Sal? *Are you losing?* Obviously you need our help. Very badly, in fact."

"Help, schmelp," Sal said. "What I need is a six week rest, and not up here. I ought to take

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an 'ab to Africa and hunt spiders or whatever the craze is right now." With all his problems he had lost touch.

"Those big trench-digging spiders are out, now," the head informed him. "Now it's nocturnal moths, again." Walt's right arm pointed at the wall and Sal saw, behind glass, three enormous iridescent cadavers, displayed under an ultraviolet lamp which brought out all their many colors. "Caught them myself," the head said, and then chided itself, "No you didn't; I did. You saw them but I popped them into the killing jar."

Sal Heim sat silently waiting for Sparky Rivers, as the two inhabitants of the head argued with each other as to which of them had brought back the African moths.

The top-notch and expensive—and dark-skinned—private investigator, Tito Cravelli, operating out of N'York, handed the woman seated across from him the findings which his Altac 3-60 computer had derived from the data provided it. It was a good machine.

"Forty hospitals," Tito said. "Forty transplant operations within the last year. Statistically, it's *unlikely* that the UN Vital Organ Fund Reserve would have had that many organs available in so limited a time, but it is possible. In other words, we've got nothing."

Mrs. Myra Sands smoothed her skirt thoughtfully, then lit a cigarette. "We'll select at random from among the forty; I want you to follow at least five or six up. How long will it take for you to do that?"

Tito calculated silently. "Say two days. If I have to go there and see people. Of course if I can do some of it on the phone—" He liked to work through the Vidphone Corporation of America's product; it meant he could stick near the Altac 3-60. And, when anything came up, he could feed the data on the spot, get an opinion without delay. He respected the 3-60; it had set him back a great deal, a year ago when he had purchased it. And he did not intend to permit it to lie idle, not if he could help it. But sometimes—

This was a difficult situation. Myra Sands was not the sort who could endure uncertainty; for her things had to be either this or that, either A or not-A—Myra made use of Aristotle's Law of the Excluded Middle, like no one else he knew. He admired her. Myra was a handsome, extremely well-educated woman, light-haired, in her middle forties; across from him she sat erect and trim in her yellow Lunar squeak-frog suit, her legs long and without defect. Her sharp chin alone let on—to Tito at least—the grimness, the no-nonsense aspect, of her personality. Myra was a businesswoman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

first, before anything else; as one of the nation's foremost authorities in the field of therapeutic abortions she was highly paid and highly honored . . . and she was well aware of this. After all, she had been at it for years. And Tito respected anyone who lived as an independent business person; after all, he, too, was his own boss, beholden to no one, to no subsidizing organization or economic entity. He and Myra had something in common. Although of course Myra would have denied it. Myra Sands was a terrible goddam snob; to her, Tito Cravelli was an *employee* whom she had hired to find out—or rather to establish as fact—certain information about her husband.

He could not imagine why Lurton Sands had married her. Surely it had been conflict—psychological, social, sexual, professional—from the start.

However, there was no explaining the chemistry which joined men and women, locked them in embraces of hate and mutual suffering sometimes for ninety years on end. In his line, Tito had seen plenty of it, enough to last him even a jerry lifetime.

"Call Lattimore Hospital in San Francisco," Myra instructed in her crisp, vigilantly-authoritative voice. "In August, Lurton transplanted a spleen for an army major, there; I think his name was Walleck or some such quiddity as that. I recall, at the time . . . Lurton had had, what shall I say? A little too much to drink. It was evening and we were having dinner. Lurton blurted out some darn thing or other. About 'paying heavily' for the spleen. You *know*, Tito, that VOFR prices are rigidly set by the UN and they're not high; in fact they're too low . . . that's the cardinal reason the fund runs out of certain vital organs so often. Not from a lack of supply so much as the existence of too darn many takers."

"Hmm," Tito said, jotting notes.

"Lurton always said that if the VOFR only were to raise its rates —"

"You're positive it was a spleen?" Tito broke in.

"Yes," Myra nodded curtly, exhaling streamers of gray smoke that swirled toward the lamp behind her, a cloud that drifted in the artificial light of the office. It was dark outside, now; the time was seven-thirty.

"A spleen," Tito recapitulated. "In August of this year. At Lattimore General Hospital in San Francisco. An army major named —"

"Now I'm beginning to think it was Wozzeck," Myra put in. "Or is that an opera composer?"

"It's an opera," Tito said. "By Berg. Seldom performed, now." He lifted the receiver of the vidphone. "I'll get hold of the business office at Lattimore; it's only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

four-thirty, out there on the Coast."

Myra rose to her feet and roamed restlessly about the office, rubbing her gloved hands together in a motion that irritated Tito and made it difficult for him to concentrate on his call.

"Have you had dinner?" he asked her, as he waited on the line.

"No. But I never eat until eight-thirty or nine; it's barbaric to eat any earlier."

Tito said, "Can I take you to dinner, Mrs. Sands? I know an awfully good little Armenian place in the Village. The food's actually prepared by humans."

"Humans? As compared to what?"

"Autonomic food-processing systems," Tito murmured. "Or don't you ever eat in autoprep restaurants?" After all, the Sands were wealthy; possibly they normally enjoyed human-prepared food. "Personally, I can't stand autopreps. The food's always so predictable. Never burned, never —" He broke off; on the vidscreen the miniature features of an employee at Lattimore had formed. "Miss, this is Life-factors Research Consultants of N'York calling. I'd like to inquire about an operation performed on a Major Wozzeck or Walleck last August, a spleen transplant."

"Wait," Myra said suddenly. "Now I remember; it wasn't a spleen—it was an islands of Langerhans; you know, that part of the pancreas which controls sugar production in the body. I remember because Lurton got to talking about it because he saw me putting two teaspoonsful of sugar in my coffee."

"I'll look that up," the girl at Lattimore said, overhearing Myra. She turned to her files.

"What I want to find out," Tito sail to her, "is the exact date at which the organ was obtained from the UN's VOFR. If you can give me that datum, please." He waited, accustomed to having to be patient. His line of work absolutely required that virtue, above all others, including intelligence.

The girl presently said, "A Colonel Weiswasser received an organ transplant on August twelve of this year. Islands of Langerhans, obtained from the VOFR the day before, August eleven. Dr. Lurton Sands performed the operation and of course certified the organ."

"Thanks, miss," Tito said, and broke the connection.

"The VOFR office is closed," Myra said, as he began once more to dial. "You'll have to wait until tomorrow."

"I know somebody there," Tito said, and continued dialing.

At last he had Gus Anderton, his contact at the UN's vital organ bank. "Gus, this is Tito. Check August eleven this year for me. Islands of Langerhans; okay? See if

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the org-trans surgeon we previously had reference to picked up one there on that date."

His contact was back almost at once with the information. "Correct, Tito; it all checks out. Aug eleven, islands of Langerhans. Transferred by jet-hopper to Lattimore in San Francisco. Routine in every way."

Tito Cravelli cut the circuit, exasperated.

After a pause Myra Sands, still pacing restlessly about his office, exclaimed, "But I *know* he's been obtaining organs illegally. He never turned anybody down, and you know there never have been that many organs in the bank-reserve—he had to get them somewhere else. He still is; I know it."

"Knowing this and proving this are two—"

Turning to him, Myra snapped, "And outside of the UN bank there's only one other place he would or could go."

"Agreed," Tito said, nodding. "But as your attorney said, you better have proof before you make the charge; otherwise he'll sue you for slander, libel, defamation of character, the entire biz. He'd have to. You'd give him no choice."

"You don't like this," Myra said.

Tito shrugged. "I don't have to like it. That doesn't matter."

"But you think I'm treading on dangerous ground."

"I know you are. Even if it's true that Lurton Sands—"

"Don't say 'even if.' He's a fanatic and you know it; he identifies so fully with his public image as a savior of lives that he's simply had to make a psychological break with reality. Probably he started in a small way, with what he told himself was a unique situation, an exception; he had to have a particular organ and he took it. And the next time—" She shrugged. "It was easier. And so on."

"I see," Tito said.

"I think I see what we're going to have to do," Myra said. "What *you're* going to have to do. Get started on this: find out from your contact at the UN exactly what organ the bank lacks at this time. Then deliberately set up another emergency situation; have someone in a hospital somewhere apply to Lurton for that particular transplant. I realize that it'll cost one hell of a lot of money but I'm willing to underwrite the expense. Do you see?"

"I see," Tito said. In other words, trap Lurton Sands. Play on the man's determination to save the life of a dying person . . . make his humanitarianism the instrument of his destruction. What a way to earn a living, Tito thought to himself. Another day, another dollar . . . it's hardly that. Not when you get involved in something like this.

"I know you can arrange it,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Myra said to him fervently. "You're good; you're experienced. Aren't you?"

"Yes, Mrs. Sands," Tito said. "I'm experienced. Yes, possibly I can trap the guy. Lead him by the nose. It shouldn't be too hard."

"Make sure your 'patient' offers him plenty," Myra said in a bitter, taut voice. "Lurton will bite if he senses a good financial return; that's what interests him—in spite of what you and the darn public may or may not imagine. I ought to know; I've lived with him a good many years, shared his most intimate thoughts." She smiled, briefly. "It seems a shame I have to tell you how to go about your business, but obviously I have to." Her smile returned, cold and exceedingly hard.

"I appreciate your assistance," Tito said woodenly.

"No you don't. You think I'm trying to do something wicked. Something out of mere spite."

Tito said, "I don't think anything; I'm just hungry. Maybe you don't eat until eight-thirty or nine but I have pyloric spasms and I have to eat by seven. Will you excuse me?" He rose to his feet, pushing his desk chair back. "I want to close up shop." He did not renew his offer to take her out to dinner.

Gathering up her coat and purse, Myra Sands said, "Have you located Cally Vale and if so where?"

"No luck," Tito said, and felt uncomfortable.

Staring at him, Myra said, "But why can't you locate her? She must be *somewhere!*" She looked as if she could not believe her ears.

"The court process servers can't find her either," Tito pointed out. "But I'm sure she'll turn up by trial time." He, too, had been wondering why his staff had been unable to locate Lurton Sands' mistress; after all, there were only a limited number of places a person could hide, and detection and tracing devices, especially during the last two decades, had improved to an almost supernatural accuracy.

Myra said, "I'm beginning to think you're just not any good. I wonder if I shouldn't put my business in somebody else's hands."

"That's your privilege," Tito said. His stomach ached, a series of spasms of his pyloric valve. He wondered if he was ever going to get an opportunity to eat, tonight.

"You must find Miss Vale," Myra said. "She knows all the details of his activity; that's why he's got her hidden—in fact she's pumping blood with a heart he procured for her."

"Okay, Mrs. Sands," Tito agreed, and inwardly winced at the growing pain...

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BLACK-HAIRED, EXTREME-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly dark youth said shyly, "We came to you, Mrs. Sands, because we read about you in the homeopape. It said you were very good and also you take people without too much money." He added, "We don't have any money at all right now, but maybe we can pay you later."

Brusquely, Myra Sands said, "Don't worry about that now." She surveyed the boy and girl. "Let's see. Your names are Art and Rachael Chaffy. Sit down, both of you, and let's talk, all right?" She smiled at them, her professional smile of greeting and warmth; it was reserved for her clients, given to no one else, not even to her husband—or, as she thought of Lurton now, her former husband.

In a soft voice the girl, Rachael, said "We tried to get them to let us become bibs but they said we should consult an advisor first." She explained, "I'm—well, you see, somehow I got to be a preg. I'm sorry." She ducked her head fearfully, with shame, her cheeks flushing deep scarlet. "It's too bad they don't just let you kill yourself, like they did a few years ago," she murmured. "Because that would solve it."

"That law," Myra said firmly, "was a bad idea. However imperfect deep-sleep is, it's certainly preferable to the old form of self-destruction undertaken on an individual basis. How far advanced is your pregnancy, dear?"

"About a month and a half," Rachael Chaffy said, lifting her head a trifle. She managed to meet Myra's gaze; for a moment, at least.

"Then abort-processing presents no difficulty," Myra said. "It's routine. We can arrange for it by noon today and have it done by six tonight. At any one of several free government abort clinics here in the area. Just a moment." Her secretary had opened the door to the office and was trying to catch her attention. "What is it, Tina?"

"An urgent phone call for you, Mrs. Sands."

Myra clicked on her desk vidphone. On the screen Tito Cravelli's features formed in replica, puffy with agitation.

"Mrs. Sands," Tito said, "sorry to bother you at your office so early this morning. But a number of tracking devices we've been employing here have wound up their term of service and have come home. I thought you'd want to know. Cally Vale is nowhere on Earth. That's absolutely been determined; that's definite." He was silent, then, waiting for her to say something.

"Then she emigrated," Myra said, trying to picture the dainty and rather nauseatingly fragile Miss Vale in the rugged environment of Mars or Ganymede.

"No," Tito Cravelli said emphatically, shaking his head. "We've checked on that, of course.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cally Vale did not emigrate. It doesn't make sense but there it is. No wonder we're making no headway; we're faced with an impossible situation." He did not appear very happy about it. His features sagged glumly.

Myra said, "She's not on Earth and she didn't emigrate. Then she must—" It was obvious to her; why hadn't they thought of it right away, when Cally originally vanished from sight? "She's entered a government warehouse. Cally's a bib." It was the only possibility left.

"We're looking into that," Tito said, but without enthusiasm. "I admit it's possible but frankly I just don't buy it. Personally, I think they've thought up something new, something original; I'd stake my job on it, everything I have." Tito's tone was insistent, now. No longer hesitant. "But we'll check all the Dept of SPW warehouses, all ninety-four of them. That'll take a couple of days at least. Meanwhile—" He caught sight of the young couple, the Chaffys, waiting silently. "Perhaps I'd better discuss it with you later; there's no urgency."

Maybe what the homeopapes are hinting at actually did take place, Myra thought to herself. Perhaps Lurton has actually killed her. So she can't be subpoenaed by Frank Fenner at the trial.

"Do you believe Cally Vale is dead?" Myra said to Tito bluntly. She ignored the young couple seated opposite her; they did not at the moment matter: this was far too important.

"I'm in no position—" Tito began. Myra cut him off; she broke the connection and the screen faded. I'm in no position to say, she finished for him. But who is? Lurton? Maybe even he doesn't know where Cally is. She might have run out on him. Gone to the Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite and joined the army of girls there, under an assumed name. With relish, Myra pondered that, picturing her former husband's mistress as one of Thisbe's creatures, sexless and mechanical and automatic. Whch will it be, Cally? One, two, three or four? Only, the choice isn't yours. It's theirs. Every time. Myra laughed. It's where you ought to be, Cally, she thought. For the rest of your life, for the next two hundred years.

"Please forgive the interruption," Myra said to the young couple seated opposite her. "And do go on."

"Well," the girl Rachael said awkwardly, "Art and I felt that—we thought over the abortion and we just don't want to do it. I don't know why, Mrs. Sands. I know we should. But we can't."

There was silence, then.

"I don't see what you came to me for," Myra said. "If you've made up your minds against it al-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ready. Obviously, from a practical standpoint you should go through with it; you're probably frightened . . . after all, you are very young. But I'm not trying to talk you into it. A decision of this sort has to be your own."

In a low voice Art said, "We're not scared, Mrs. Sands. That's not it. We—well, we'd like to have the baby. That's all."

Myra Sands did not know what to say. She had never, in her practice, run into anything quite like this; it baffled her.

She could see already that this was going to be a bad day. Between this and Tito's phonecall—it was too much. And so early. It was not yet even nine a.m.

In the basement of Pethel Jiffi-scuttler Sales & Service the repairman Rick Erickson prepared, for the second day in a row, to enter the defective 'scuttler of Dr. Lurton Sands, Jr. He still had not found what he was searching for.

However, he did not intend to give up. He felt, on an intuitive level, that he was very close. It would not be long now.

From behind him a voice said, "What are you doing, Rick?"

Startled, Erickson jumped, glanced around. At the door of the repair department stood his employer, Darius Pethel, heavy-set in his wrinkled dark-brown old-fashioned *jerry*-type wool suit which he customarily wore.

"Listen," Erickson said. "This is Dr. Sands' 'scuttler. You can laugh, but I think he's got his mistress in here, somewhere."

"What?" Pethel laughed.

"I mean it. I don't think she's dead, even though I talked to Sands long enough to know he could do it if he felt it was necessary—he's that kind of guy. Anyhow nobody's found her, even Mrs. Sands. Naturally they can't find her, because Lurton's got his 'scuttler in here with us, out of sight. He knows it's here *but they don't*. And he doesn't want it back, no matter what he says; he wants it stuck down here, right in this basement."

Staring at him Pethel said, "Great fud. Is this what you've been doing on my time? Working our detective theories?"

Erickson said, "This is important! Even if it doesn't mean any money for you. Hell, maybe it does; if I'm lucky and find her maybe you can sell her back to Mrs. Sands."

After a pause Darius Pethel shrugged in a philosophical way. "Okay. So look. If you do find her—"

Besides Pethel the salesman of the firm, Stuart Hadley, appeared. He said breezily, "What's up, Dar?" As always cheerful and interested.

"Rick's searching for Dr. Sands' mistress," Pethel said. He jerked his thumb at the 'scuttler.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Is she pretty?" Hadley asked. "Well starfed?" He looked hungry.

"You've seen her pics in the homeopapes," Pethel said. "She's cute. Otherwise why do you suppose the doctor risked his marriage, if she wasn't something exceptional? Come on, Hadley; I need you upstairs on the floor. We can't all three be down here—someone'll walk away with the register." He started up the stairs.

"And she's in there?" Hadley said, looking puzzled as he bent to peer into the 'scuttler. "I don't see her, Dar."

Darius Pethel gaffawed. "Neither do I. Neither does Rick, but he's still searching—and on my time, goddam it! Listen, Rick; if you find her she's *my* mistress, because you're on my time, working for me."

All three of them laughed at that.

"Okay," Rick agreed, on his hands and knees, scraping the surface of the 'scuttler tube with the blade of a screwdriver. "You can laugh and I admit it's funny. But I'm not stopping. Obviously, the rent isn't visible; if it was, Doc Sands wouldn't have dared leave it here. He may think I'm dumb, but not that dumb—he's got it concealed and real well."

"'Rent,'" Pethel echoed. He frowned, starting back a few steps down the stairs and into the basement once more. "You mean like Henry Ellis found, years ago? That rupture in the tube-wall that led to ancient Israel?"

"Israel is right," Rick said briefly, as he scraped. His keen, thoroughly-trained eye saw all at once in the surface near at hand a slight irregularity, a distortion. Leaning forward, he reached out his hand—

His groping fingers passed through the wall of the tube and disappeared.

"Jesus," Rick said. He raised his invisible fingers, felt nothing at first, and then touched the upper edge of the rent. "I found it," he said. He looked around, but Pethel had gone. "Darius!" he yelled, but there was no answer. "Damn him!" he said in fury to Hadley.

"You found what?" Hadley asked, starting cautiously into the tube. "You mean you found the Vale woman? Cally Vale?"

Headfirst, Rick Erickson crept into the rent.

He sprawled, snatching for support; falling, he struck hard ground and cursed. Opening his eyes he saw, above, a pale blue sky with a few meager clouds. And, around him, a meadow. Bees, or what looked something more or less like bees, buzzed in tall-stemmed white flowers as large as saucers. The air smelled of sweetness, as if the flowers had impregnated the atmosphere itself.

I'm there, he said to himself. I got through; this is where Doc Sands hid his mistress to keep her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from testifying for Mrs. Sands at the trial or hearing or whatever it's called. He stood up, cautiously. Behind him he made out a hazy shimmer: the nexus with the tube of the Jiffi-scuttler back in the store's basement in Kansas City. I want to keep my bearings, he said to himself warily. If I get lost I may not be able to get back again and that might be bad.

Where is this? he asked himself. Must work that out—now.

Gravity like Earth's. Must be Earth, then, he decided. Long time ago? Long time in the future? Think what this is worth; the hell with the man's mistress, the hell with him and his personal problems—that's nothing. He looked wildly around for some sign of habitation, for something animal-like, or human; something to tell him what epoch this was, past or future. Saber-tooth tiger, maybe. Or trilobite. No, too late for the trilobite already; look at those bees. This is the break Terran Development has been trying to uncover for thirty years, now, he said to himself. And the rat that found it used it for his own sneaky goings-on, as a place merely to hide his doxie. What a world! Erickson began slowly to walk, step by step . . .

Far off, a figure moved.

Shading his eyes against the glare of the sky, Rick Erickson tried to make out what it was. Primitive man? Cro-Magnon or some such thing? Big-domed inhabitant of the future, perhaps? He squinted—it was a woman; he could tell by her hair. She wore slacks and she was running toward him. Cally, he thought. Doc Sands' mistress, hurrying toward me. Must think I'm Sands. In panic, he halted; what'll I do? he wondered. Maybe I better go back, think this out. He started to turn in the direction he had come.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw the girl's arm come up swiftly.

No, he thought. Don't.

He stumbled as he snatched at the hazy, small loop which connected the two environments, entrance to the 'scuttler tube.

The red glow of an aimed laser-beam passed over his head.

You missed me, he thought in terror. But—he clawed for the entrance, found it, began to struggle back through. But next time. *Next time!*

"Stop," he shouted at her without looking at her. His voice echoed in the bee-zooming plain of flowers.

The second laser-beam caught him in the back.

He put his hand out, saw it pass through the haze and disappear beyond. It was safe but he was not. She had killed him; it was too late, now, too late to get away from her. Why didn't she wait? he asked himself. Find out who I was? Must have been afraid.

Again the laser-beam flicked. It

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

touched the back of his head and that was that. There was no returning for him, no reentry into the safety of the tube.

Rick Erickson was dead.

Standing on the far side, in the tube of Dr. Sands' Jiffi-scuttler, Stuart Hadley waited nervously, then saw Rick Erickson's fingers jerk through the wall near the floor; the fingers writhed and Hadley stooped down and grabbed Erickson by the wrist. Trying to get back, he realized, and pulled Erickson by the arm with all his strength.

It was a corpse that he drew into the tube beside him.

Horrified, Hadley rose unsteadily to his feet; he saw the two clean holes and knew that Erickson had been killed with a laser rifle, probably from a distance. Stumbling down the tube, Hadley reached the controls of the 'scuttler and cut the power off; the shimmer of the entrance hoop at once vanished and he knew—or hoped—that now they, whoever they were who had murdered Rick Erickson, could not follow him through.

"Pethel!" he shouted. "Come down here!" He ran to Erickson's work bench and the intercom. "Mr. Pethel," he said, "come back down here to the basement right away. Erickson's dead."

The next he knew, Darius Pethel stood beside him, examining the body of the repairman. "He must have found it," Pethel muttered, ashen-faced and trembling. "Well, he got paid for his nosiness; he sure got paid."

"We better get the police," Hadley said.

"Yes." Pethel nodded vacantly. "Of course. I see you turned it off. Good thing. We better leave it strictly alone. The poor guy, the poor goddam guy; look at what he got for being smart enough to figure it all out. Look, he's got something in his hand." He bent down, opening Erickson's fingers.

The dead hand held a wad of grass.

"No org-trans operation can help him, either," Pethel said. "Because the beam caught him in the head. Got his brain. Too bad." He glanced at Stuart Hadley. "Anyhow the best org-trans surgeon is Sands and he isn't going to do anything to help Erickson. You can make book on that."

"A place where there's grass," Hadley murmured, touching the contents of the dead man's hand. "Where can it be? Not on Earth. Not now, anyway."

"Must be the past," Pethel said. "So we've got time-travel. Isn't it great?" His face twisted with grief. "Terrific beginning, one good man dead. How many left to go? Imagine a guy's reputation meaning that much to him, that he'd let this happen. Or maybe Sands doesn't know; maybe she was just

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

given the laser gun to protect herself. In case his wife's private cops got to her. And anyhow we don't know for sure if she did it; it could have been someone else entirely, not Cally Vale at all. What do we know about it? All we know is that Erickson is dead. And there was something basically wrong with the theory he was going on."

"You can give Sands the benefit of the doubt, if you want," Hadley said, "but I'm not going to." He stood up, then, taking a deep shuddering breath. "Can we get the police, now? You call them; I can't talk well enough to. You do it, Pethel, okay?"

Unsteadily, Darius Pethel moved toward the phone on Erickson's work bench, his hand extended gropingly, as if his apperception of touch had begun to disintegrate. He picked up the receiver and then he turned to Stuart Hadley and said, "Wait. This is a mistake. You know who we've got to call? The factory. We have to tell Terran Development about this; it's what they're after. They come first."

Hadley, staring at him, said, "I —don't agree."

"This is more important than what you think or I think, more important than Sands and Cally Vale, any of us." Dar Pethel began to dial. "Even if one of us is dead. That still doesn't matter. You know what I'm thinking about? Emigration. You saw the grass in Erickson's hand. You know what it means. It means the hell with that girl on the far side, or whoever it is over there who shot Erickson. It means the hell with any of us and all of us, our sentiments and opinions." He gestured. "All our lives put together."

Dimly, Stuart Hadley understood. Or thought he did. "But she'll probably kill the next person who—"

"Let TD worry about that," Pethel said savagely. "That's their problem. They've got company police, armed guards they use for patrol purposes; let them send them over, first." His voice was low and harsh. "Let them lose a few men, so what. The lives of millions of people are involved in this, now. You get that, Hadley? *Do you?*"

"Y-yes," Hadley said, nodding.

"Anyhow," Pethel said, more calmly, now, "it's legitimately within the jurisdiction of TD because it took place within one of their 'scuttlers. Call it an accident; think of it that way. Unavoidable and awful. Between an entrance and an exit hoop. Naturally the company has to know." He turned his back to Hadley, then, concentrating on the vidphone.

"I think," Salisbury Heim said to his presidential candidate James Briskin, "I have something cooking you won't like. I've been talking to George Walt—"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At once Jim Briskin said, "No deal. Not with them. I know what they want and that's out, Sal."

"If you don't do business with George Walt," Heim said steadily, "I'm going to have to resign as your campaign manager. I just can't take any more, not after that planet-wetting speech of yours. Things are breaking too badly for us as it is; we can't take George Walt on in addition to everything else."

"There's something even worse," Jim Briskin said, after a pause. "Which you haven't heard. A wire came from Bruno Mini. He was delighted with my speech and he's on his way here to—as he puts it—'join forces with me.'"

Heim said, "But you can still—"

"Mini's already spoken to homeopape reporters. So it's too late to head him off média-wise. Sorry."

"You're going to lose."

"Okay, I'll have to lose."

"What gets me," Heim said bitterly, "what really gets me is that even if you did win the election you couldn't have it all your way; one man just can't alter things that much. The Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite is going to remain; the bibs are going to remain; so are Nonovulid and the abort-consultants—you can chip away a little here and there but not—"

He ceased, because Dorothy Gill had come up to Jim Briskin. "A phone call for you, Mr. Briskin. The gentleman says it's urgent and he won't be wasting your time. You don't know him, he says, so he didn't give his name." She added, "He's a Col. If that helps you identify him."

"It doesn't," Jim said. "But I'll talk to him anyhow." Obviously, he was glad to break off the conversation with Sal; relief showed on his face. "Bring the phone here, Dotty."

"Yes, Mr. Briskin." She disappeared and presently was back, carrying the extension vidphone.

"Thanks." Jim Briskin pressed the hold button, releasing it, and the vidscreen glowed. A face formed, swarthy and handsome, a keen-eyed man, well-dressed and evidently agitated. Who is he? Sal Heim asked himself. I know him. I've seen a pic of him somewhere.

Then he identified the man. It was the big-time N'York investigator who was working for Myra Sands; it was a man named Tito Cravelli, and he was a tough individual indeed. What did he want with Jim?

The image of Tito Cravelli said, "Mr. Briskin, I'd like to have lunch with you. In private. I have something to discuss with you, just you and me; it's vitally important to you, I assure you." He added, with a glance toward Sal Heim, "So vital I don't want anybody else around."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Maybe this is going to be an assassination attempt, Sal Heim thought. Someone, a fanatic from CLEAN, sent by Verne Engel and his crowd of nuts. "You better not go, Jim," he said, aloud.

"Probably not," Jim said. "But I am anyhow." To the image on the vidscreen he said, "What time and where?"

Tito Cravelli said, "There's a little restaurant in the N'York slum area, in the five hundred block of Fifth Avenue; I always eat there when I'm in N'York—the food's prepared by hand. It's called Scotty's Place. Will that be satisfactory? Say at one p.m., N'York time."

"All right," Jim Briskin agreed. "At Scotty's Place at one o'clock. I've been there." He added tartly, "They're willing to serve Cols."

"Everyone serves Cols," Tito said, "when I'm along." He broke the connection; the screen faded and died.

"I don't like this," Sal Heim said.

"We're ruined anyhow," Jim reminded him. "Didn't you say, just a minute ago?" He smiled laconically. "I think the time has arrived for me to clutch at straws, Sal. Any straw I can reach. Even this."

"What shall I tell George Walt? They're waiting. I'm supposed to set up a visit by you to the satellite within twenty-four hours; that would be by six o'clock tonight." Getting out his handkerchief, Sal Heim mopped his forehead. "After that—"

"After that," Jim said, "They begin systematically campaigning against me."

Sal nodded.

"You can tell George Walt," Jim said, "that in my Chicago speech today I'm going to come out and advocate the shutting of the satellite. And if I'm elected —"

"They know already," Sal Heim said. "There was a leak."

"There's always a leak." Jim did not seem perturbed.

Reaching into his coat pocket, Sal brought out a sealed envelope. "Here's my resignation." He had been carrying it for some time.

Jim Briskin accepted the envelope; without opening it he put it in his coat-pouch. "I hope you'll be watching my Chicago speech, Sal. It's going to be an important one." He grinned sorrowfully at his ex-campaign manager; his pain at this breakdown of their relationship showed in the deep lines of his face. The break had been long in coming; it had hung there in the atmosphere between them in their former discussions.

But Jim intended to go on anyhow. And do what had to be done.

CHAPTER FIVE

As he flew by jet'ab to Scotty's Place, Jim Briskin

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thought, At least now I don't have to come out for Lurton Sands; I don't have to follow Sal's advice any more on any topic because if he's not my campaign manager he can't tell me what to do. To some extent it was a relief. But on a deeper level Jim Briskin felt acutely unhappy. I'm going to have trouble getting along without Sal, he realized. I don't *want* to get along without him.

But it was already done. Sal, with his wife Patricia, had gone on to his home in Cleveland, for a much-delayed rest. And Jim Briskin, with his speechwriter Phil Danville and his press secretary Dorothy Gill, was on his way in the opposite direction, toward downtown N'York, its tiny shops and restaurants and old, decaying apartment buildings, and all the microscopic, outdated business offices where peculiar and occult transactions continually took place. It was a world which intrigued Jim Briskin, but it was also a world he knew little about; he had been shielded from it most of his life.

Seated beside him, Phil Danville said, "He may come back, Jim. You know Sal when he gets overburdened; he blows up, falls into fragments. But after a week of lazing around—"

"Not this time," Jim said. The split was too basic.

"By the way," Dorothy said. "Before he left, Sal told me who this man you're meeting is. Sal recognized him; did he tell you? It's Tito Cravelli, Sal says. You know. Myra Sands' investigator."

"No," Jim said. "I didn't know." Sal had said nothing to him; the period in which Sal Heim gave him the benefit of his experience was over, had ended there on the spot.

At Republican-Liberal campaign headquarters in N'York he stopped briefly to let off Phil Danville and Dorothy Gill and then he went on, alone, to meet with Tito Cravelli at Scotty's Place.

Cravelli, looking nervous and keyed-up, was already in a booth in the rear of the restaurant, waiting for him, when he arrived.

"Thanks, Mr. Briskin," Tito Cravelli said, as Jim seated himself across from him. Hurriedly, Cravelli sipped what remained of his cup of coffee. "This won't take long. What I want for my information is a great deal. I want a promise from you that when you're elected—and you will be, because of this—you'll bring me in at cabinet rank." He was silent, then.

"Good god," Jim said mildly. "Is that all you want?"

"I'm entitled to it," Cravelli said. "For getting this information to you. I came across it because I have someone working for me in —" He broke off abruptly. "I want the post of Attorney General; I think I can handle the job . . . I think I'll be a good Attorney

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

General. If I'm not, you can fire me. But you have to let me in for a chance at it."

"Tell me what your information is. I can't make that promise until I hear it."

Cravelli hesitated. "Once I tell you—but you're honest, Briskin. Everyone knows that. There's a way you can get rid of the bibs. You can bring them back to activity, full activity."

"Where?"

"Not here," Cravelli said. "Obviously. Not on Earth. The man I have working for me who picked this up is an employee of Terran Development. What does that suggest to you?"

After a pause Jim Briskin said, "They've made a break-through."

"A little firm has. A retailer in Kansas City, repairing a defective Jiffi-scuttler. They did it—or rather found it. Discovered it. The 'scuttler's at TD, now, being gone over by factory engineers. It was moved east two hours ago; they acted immediately, as soon as the retailer contacted them. They knew what it meant." He added, "Just as you and I do, and my man working for them."

"Where's the break-through to? What time period?"

"No time period. Evidently. The conversion seems to have taken place in spacial terms, as near as they can determine. A planet with about the same mass Earth, similar atmosphere, well-developed fauna and flora, but not Earth—they managed to snap a sky-chart, get a stellar reading. Within another few hours they'll probably have plotted it exactly, know which star-system it lies in. Apparently it's a long, long way from here. Too far for direct deep-space ships to probe—at least for some time to come. This break-through, this direct shorted-out route, will have to be utilized for at least the next few decades."

The waitress came for Jim's order.

"Perkin's Syn-Cof," he murmured absently.

The waitress departed.

"Cally Vale's there," Tito Cravelli said.

"What!"

"Doctor put her across. That's why my man got in touch with me; as you may know, I've been retained to search for Cally, trying to produce her on demand for the trial. It's a mess; she lasered an employee of this Kansas City retialer, its one and only tried and true 'scuttler repairman. He had gone across, exploring. Too bad for him. But in the great scheme of all things—"

"Yes," Jim Briskin agreed. Cravelli was right; it was small cost indeed. With so many millions of lives—and, potentially, billions—involved.

"Naturally TD has declared this top-secret. They've thrown up an enormous security screen; I was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lucky to get hold of the poop at all. If I hadn't already had a man in there—" Cravelli gestured.

"I'll name you to the cabinet," Jim Briskin said. "As Attorney General. The arrangement doesn't please me but I think it's in order." It's worth it, he said to himself. A hundred times over. To me and to everyone else on Earth, bibs and non-bibs alike. To all of us.

Sagging with relief and exultation, Tito Cravelli burbled, "Wow. I can't believe it; this is great!" He held out his hand, but Jim ignored it; he had too much else on his mind at the moment to want to congratulate Tito Cravelli.

Jim thought, *Sal Heim got out a little too soon. He should have stuck around.* So much for Sal's political intuition; at the crucial moment it had failed to materialize for him.

Seated in her office, abort-consultant Myra Sands once more leafed through Tito's brief report. But already, outside her window, a news machine for one of the major homeopapes was screeching out the news that Cally Vale had been found; it had been made public by the police.

I didn't think you could do it, Tito, Myra said to herself. Well, I was wrong. You were worth your fee, large as it is.

It will be quite a trial, she said to herself with relish.

From a nearby office, probably the brokerage firm next door, the amplified sound of a man's voice rose up and then was turned down to a more reasonable level. Someone had tuned in the TV, was watching the Republican-Liberal presidential candidate giving his latest speech. Perhaps I should listen, too, she decided, and reached to turn on the TV set at her desk.

The set warmed, and there, on the screen, appeared the dark, intense features of Jim Briskin. She swiveled her chair toward the set and momentarily put aside Tito's report. After all, anything James Briskin said had become important; he might easily be their next president.

". . . an initial action on my part," Briskin was saying, "and one which many may disapprove of, but one dear to my heart, will be to initiate legal action against the so-called Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite. I've thought about this topic for some time; this is not a snap decision on my part. But, much more vital than that, I think we will see the Golden Door satellite become thoroughly obsolete. That would be best of all. The role of sexuality in our society could return to its biological norm: as a means to childbirth rather than an end in itself."

Oh really? Myra thought archly. Exactly how?

"I am about to give you a piece of news which none of you have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heard," Briskin continued. "It will make a vast difference in all our lives . . . so great, in fact, that no one could possibly foresee its full extent at this time. A new possibility for emigration is about to open up at last. At Terran Development—"

On Myra's desk the vidphone rang. Cursing in irritation she turned down the sound of the television set and took the receiver from its support. "This is Mrs. Sands," she said. "Could you please call back in a few moments, thank you? I'm extremely busy right now."

It was the dark-haired boy, Art Chaffy. "We were just wondering what you'd decided," he mumbled apologetically. But he did not ring off. "It means a lot to us, Mrs. Sands."

"I know it does, Art," Myra Sands said, "but if you'll just give me a few more minutes, possibly half an hour—" She strained to hear what James Briskin was saying on the television; almost, she could make out the low murmur of words. What was his new news? Where were they going to emigrate to? A virgin environment? Well, obviously; it would have to be. But precisely where is it? Myra wondered. Are you about to pull this virgin world out of your sleeve, Mr. Briskin? Because if you are, I would like to see it done; that would be worth watching.

"Okay," Art Chaffy said. "I'll call you later, Mrs. Sands. And I'm sorry to pester you." He rang off, then.

"You ought to be listening to Briskin's speech," Myra murmured aloud as she swung her chair back to face the television set; bending, she turned the audio knob and the sound of Briskin's voice rose once more to clear audibility. You of all people, she said to herself.

". . . and, according to reports reaching me," Briskin said slowly and gravely, "it has an atmosphere nearly identical to that of Earth, and a similar mass as well."

Good grief, Myra Sands said to herself. If that's the case then I'm out of a job. Her heart labored painfully. No one will need abort brokers any more. But frankly I'm just as glad, she decided. It's a task I'd like to see end—forever.

Hands pressed together tautly, she listened to the remainder of Jim Briskin's momentous Chicago speech.

My god, she thought. This is a piece of history being made, this discovery. If it's true. If this isn't just a campaign stunt.

Somewhere inside her she new that it was true. Because Jim Briskin was not the kind of person who would make this up.

At the Oakland, California branch of the U.S. Government Department of Special Public Welfare, Herbert Lackmore also sat listening to presidential candi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

date Jim Briskin's Chicago speech, being carried on all channels of the TV as it was beamed from the R.-L. satellite above.

He'll be elected now, Lackmore realized. We'll have a Col president at last, just what I was afraid of.

And, if what he's saying is so, this business about a new possibility of emigration to an untouched world with fauna and flora like Earth's, it means the bibs will be awakened. In fact, he realized with a thrill of fright, it means there won't be any more bibs. At all.

That would mean that Herb Lackmore's job would come to an end. And right away.

Because of him, Lackmore said to himself, I'm going to be out of work; I'll be in the same spot as all the Cols who come by here in a steady stream, day in day out—I'll be like some nineteen year old Mexican or Puerto Rican or Negro kid, without prospects or hope. All I've established over the years—wiped out by this. Completely.

With shaking fingers, Herb Lackmore opened the local phone book and turned the pages.

It was time to get hold of—and join—the organization of Verne Engel's which called itself CLEAN. Because CLEAN would not sit idly by and let this happen, not if CLEAN believed as Herb Lackmore did.

Now was the time for CLEAN to do something. And not necessarily of a non-violent nature; it was too late for non-violence to work. Something more was required, now. Much more. The situation had taken a dreadful turn and it would have to be rectified, by direct and quick action.

And if they won't do it, Lackmore said to himself, I will. I'm not afraid to; I know it has to be done.

On the TV screen Jim Briskin's face was stern as he said, ". . . will provide a natural outlet for the biological pressures at work on everyone in our society. We will be free at last to—"

"You know what this means?" George of George Walt said to his brother Walt.

"I know," Walt answered. "It means that nurf Sal Heim got nothing for us, nothing at all. You watch Briskin; I'm going to call Verne Engel and make some kind of arrangements. Him we can work with."

"Okay," George said, nodding their shared head. He kept his eye on the TV screen, while his brother dialed the vidphone.

"All that gabble with Sal Heim," Walt grumbled, and then became silent as his brother stuck him with his elbow, signalling that he wanted to listen to the Chicago speech. "Sorry," Walt said, turning his eye to the vidscreen of the phone.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the door of their office Thisbe Olt appeared, wearing a fawnskin gown with alternating stripes of magnifying transparency. "Mr. Heim is back," she informed them. "To see you. He looks—dejected."

"We've got no business to conduct with Sal Heim," George said, with anger.

"Tell him to go back to Earth," Walt added. "And from now on the satellite is closed to him; he can't visit any of our girls—at any price. Let him die a miserable, lingering death of frustration; it'll serve him right."

George reminded him acidly, "Heim won't need us any more, if Briskin is telling the truth."

"He is," Walt said. "He's too simple a horse's ass to lie; Briskin doesn't have the ability." His call had been put through on the private circuit, now. On the vidscreen appeared the miniature image of one of Verne Engel's gaudily-uniformed personal praetorian flunkies, the green and silver outfit of the CLEAN people. "Let me talk directly to Verne," Walt said, making use of their common mouth just as George was about to address a few more remarks to Thisbe. "Tell him this is Walt, on the satellite."

"Run along," George said to Thisbe, when Walt had finished. "We're busy."

Thisbe eyed him momentarily and then shut the office door after her.

On the screen Verne Engel's pinched, wabble-like face materialized. "I see you—at least half of you—are following Briskin's rabble-rousing," Engel said. "How did you decide which half was to call me and which half was to listen to the Col?" Engel's distorted features twisted in a leer of derision.

"Watch it,—that's enough," George Walt retorted simultaneously.

"Sorry. I don't mean to offend you," Engel said, but his expression remained unchanged. "Well, what can I do for you? Please make it brief; I'd like to follow Briskin's harangue, too."

"You're going to require help," Walt said to Engel. "*If* you're going to stop Briskin now; this speech will put him across, and I don't think even concerted transmissions from our satellite—as we discussed—will be sufficient. It's just too damn clever a speech he's making. Isn't it, George?"

"It certainly is," George said, eye fixed on the TV screen. "And getting better each second as he goes along. He's barely getting started; it's a genuine spellbinder. Whacking fine."

His eye on the vidscreen, Walt continued, "You heard Briskin come out against us; you must have heard that part—everyone else in the country certainly did. Planet-wetting with Bruno Mini isn't enough, he's also got to take

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

us on. Big plans for a Col, but evidently he and his advisors feel he can handle it. We'll see. What do you plan to do, Engel? At this very crucial point?"

"I've got plans, I've got plans," Engel assured him.

"Still no-violence stuff?"

There was no audible answer, but Engel's face contorted oddly.

"Come up here to the Golden Door," Walt said, "and let's talk. I think my brother and I can see our way clear to make a donation to CLEAN, say in the neighborhood of ten or eleven mil. Would that help? You ought to be able to buy what you need with money like that."

Engel, white with shock, stammered, "S-sure, George or Walt, whichever you are."

"Get up here as soon as you can then," Walt instructed him, and rang off. "I think he'll do it for us," he said to his brother.

"A gorp like that can't handle anything," George said sourly.

"Then for pop's sake, what do we do?" Walt demanded.

"We do what we can. We help out Engel, we prompt him, shove him if necessary. But we don't pin our hopes on him, at least not entirely. We go ahead with something on our own, just to be certain. And we have to be certain; this is too serious. That Col actually means to shut us down."

Both their eyes, now, turned toward the TV screen, and both George and Walt sat back in their special wide couch to listen to the speech.

In the luxurious apartment which he maintained in Reno, Dr. Lurton Sands sat raptly listening to the television set, the Col candidate James Briskin delivering his Chicago speech. He knew what it meant. There was only one place that Briskin could have happened across a "lush, virgin world." Obviously Cally had been found.

Going to his desk drawer Lurton Sands got out the small laser pistol which he kept there and thrust it into his coat pocket. I'm amazed he'd do it, Sands thought. Capitalize off my problems—evidently I misjudged him.

Now so many lives which I could have saved will be forfeited, Sands realized. Due to this. And Briskin is responsible . . . he's taken the healing power out of my hands, darkened the force working for the good of man.

At the vidphone Sands dialed the local jet'ab company. "I want an 'ab to Chicago. As soon as possible." He gave his address, then hurried from his apartment to the elevator. Those that are hounding Cally and me to our deaths, he thought, Myra and her detectives and the homeopapes . . . now they've been joined by Jim Briskin. How could he align himself with them? Haven't I made clear to everyone what I can do in the serv-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ice of human need? *Briskin must be aware;* this can't be merely ignorance on his part.

Frantically Sands thought. Could it possibly be that Briskin *wants* the sick to die? All those waiting for me, needing my help . . . help which no one else, after I've been pushed to my death, can possibly provide.

Touching the laser pistol in his pocket Sands said aloud glumly, "It certainly is easy to be mistaken about another person." They can take you in so easily, he thought. Deliberately mislead you. Yes, deliberately!

The jet'ab swept up to the curb and slid open its door.

CHAPTER SIX

WHEN HE HAD FINISHED HIS speech Jim Briskin sat back and knew that this time he had done, at last, a damn good job. It had been the best speech of his political career, in some respects the only really decent one.

And now what? he asked himself. Sal is gone, and along with him Patricia. I've offended the powerful and immensely wealthy unicephalic brothers George Walt, not to mention Thisbe herself . . . and Terran Development, which is no small potatoes, will be furious that its break-through has been made public. But none of this matters. Nor does the fact that I'm now committed to naming a well-known private operator as my Attorney General; even that isn't important. My job was to make that speech as soon as Tito Cravelli brought me that information. And—that's exactly what I did. To the letter. No matter what the consequences.

Coming up to him, Phil Danville slapped him warmly on the back. "A hell of a good fuss, Jim. You really outdid yourself."

"Thanks, Phil," Jim Briskin murmured. He felt tired. He nodded to the TV camera men and then, with Phil Danville, walked over to join the knot of party brass waiting at the rear of the studio.

"I need a drink," Jim said to them as several of them extended their hands, wanting to shake with him. "After that." I wonder what the opposition will do now, he said to himself. What can Bill Schwarz say? Nothing, actually. I've taken the lid off the whole thing and there's no putting it back. Now that everyone knows there's a place we can emigrate to the rush will be on. By the multitudes. The warehouses will be emptied, thank god. As they should have been long ago.

I wish I had known about this, he thought abruptly, before I began publically advocating Bruno Mini's planet-wetting technique. I could have avoided that—and the break with Sal as well.

But anyhow, he said to himself, *I'll be elected.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dorothy Gill said quietly to him, "Jim, I think you're in."

"I know he is," Phil Danville agreed, grinning with pure delight. "How about it, Dotty? It's not like it was a little while ago. How'd you get hold of that info about TD, Jim? It must have cost you—"

"It did," Jim Briskin said shortly. "It cost me too much. But I'd pay it two times over."

"Now for the drink," Phil said. "There's a bar around the corner; I noticed it when we were coming in here. Let's go." He started for the door and Jim Briskin followed, hands deep in his overcoat pockets.

The sidewalk, he discovered, was crowded with people, a mob which waved at him, cheered him; he waved back, noticing that many of them were Whites as well as Cols. A good sign, he reflected, as his party moved step by step through the dense mass of people, uniformed Chicago city police clearing a path for them to the bar which Phil Danville had picked out.

From the crowd a red-headed girl, very small, wearing dazzling wubfur lounging pajamas, the kind fashionable with the girls on the Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite, came hurrying, gliding and ducking toward him breathlessly. "Mr. Briskin—"

He paused unwillingly, wondering who she was and what she wanted. One of Thisbe Olt's girls, evidently. "Yes," he said, and smiled at her.

"Mr. Briskin," the little red-haired girl gasped, "there's a rume going around the satellite—George Walt's doing something with Verne Engel, the man from CLEAN." She caught hold of him anxiously by the arm, stopping him. "They're going to assassinate you or something. Please be careful." Her face was stark with alarm.

"What's your name?" Jim asked.

"Sparky Rivers. I—work there, Mr. Briskin."

"Thanks, Sparky," he said. "I'll remember you. Maybe sometime I can give you a cabinet post." He continued to smile at her but she did not smile back. "I'm just joking," he said. "Don't be so downcast."

"I think they're going to kill you," Sparky said.

"Maybe so." He shrugged. It was certainly possible. He leaned forward, briefly, and kissed her on the forehead. "Take care of yourself, too," he said, and then walked on with Phil Danville and Dorothy Gill.

After a time Phil said "What are you going to do, Jim?"

"Nothing. What can I do? Wait, I guess. Get my drink."

"You'll have to protect yourself," Dorothy Gill said. "If anything happens to you—what'll we do then? The rest of us."

Jim Briskin said, "Emigration

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will still exist, even without me. You can still wake the sleepers. As it says in Bach's Cantata 140. *'Wachet auf.'* Sleepers, awake. That'll have to be your watchword, from now on."

"Here's the bar," Phil Danville said. Ahead of them, a Chicago policeman held the door open for them and they entered one at a time.

"It was darn nice of that girl to warn me," Jim Briskin said.

A man's voice, close to him, said, "Mr. Briskin? I'm Lurton Sands, Jr. Perhaps you've been reading about me in the homeopapes, lately."

"Oh yes," Jim said, surprised to see him; he held out his hand in greeting. "I'm glad to meet you, Dr. Sands. I want to—"

"May I talk please?" Sands said. "I have something to say to you. Because of you my life and the humanitarian work of two decades is wrecked. Don't answer; I'm not going to get into an argument with you. I'm simply telling you, so you'll understand why." Sands reached into his coat pocket. Now he held a laser pistol, pointed directly at Jim Briskin's chest. "I don't quite understand what it is about my dedication to the sick that offended you and made you turn against me, but everybody else has, so why not you. After all, Mr. Briskin, what better life-task could you set yourself than wrecking mine?" He squeezed the trigger of the pistol. The pistol did not fire and Lurton Sands stared down at it in disbelief. "Myra, my wife." He sounded almost apologetic. "She removed the energy cartridge, obviously. Evidently she thought I'd try to use it on her." He tossed the pistol away.

After a pause Jim Briskin said huskily, "Well, now what, doctor?"

"Nothing, Briskin. Nothing. If I had had more time I would have checked the gun out, but I had to hurry to get here before you left. That was quite a heroic speech you made; it'll certainly give most people the impression that you're seeking to alleviate man's problems . . . although of course you and I know better. By the way—you do realize you won't be able to awaken *all* the bibs; you can't fulfill that promise because some are dead. I'm responsible for that. Roughly four hundred of them."

Jim Briskin stared at him.

"That's right," Sands said. "I've had access to Department of Special Public Welfare warehouses. Do you know what that means? Every organ I've taken has created a dead human—when the time comes for them to be revived, whenever that may be. But I suppose the trump has to arrive sooner or later, doesn't it?"

"You'd do that?" Jim Briskin said.

"I *did* that," Sands corrected. "But remember this: *I killed only*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

potentially. Whereas in exchange I saved someone right now, someone conscious and alive in the present, someone completely dependent on my skill."

Two Chicago policemen shoved their way up to him; Dr. Sands jerked irritably away but they continued to hold onto him, pinning him between them.

Pale, Phil Danville said, "That —was almost it, Jim. Wasn't it?" He deliberately stepped between Jim Briskin and Dr. Sands, shielding Briskin. "History revisited."

"Yes," Jim managed to say. He nodded, his mouth dry. Basically he felt resigned. If Lurton Sands did not manage to carry it off then certainly someone else would, given time. It was just too easy. Weapons technology had improved too much in the last hundred years; everyone knew that, and now the assassin did not even have to be in his vicinity. Like an act of evil magic it could be done from a distance. And the instruments were cheap and available to virtually anyone—even, as history had shown, some ignorant, worthless smallfry, without friends, funds, or even a fanatical purpose, an overriding political cause.

This incident with Lurton Sands was a vile harbinger.

"Well," Phil Danville said, and sighed, "I guess we have to go on. What do you want to drink?"

"A *Black Russian*," Jim decided, after a pause. "Vodka and—"

"I know," Phil interrupted. His face still ragged with fear and gloom he made his way unsteadily over to the bar to order.

To Dotty Gill, Jim said, "Even if they get me I've done my job. I keep telling myself that over and over again, anyhow. I broke the news about TD's breakthrough and that's enough."

"Do you actually mean that?" she demanded. "You're that fatalistic about it, about your chances?" She stared unwinkingly up into his face.

"Yes," he said, finally. And well he might be.

I have a feeling, he thought to himself, that this is not the time a Negro is going to make it to the presidency.

His contact within CLEAN came via an individual named Dave DeWinter. DeWinter had joined the movement at its inception and had reported to Tito Cravelli throughout. Now, hurriedly, DeWinter told his employer the most recent—and urgent—news.

"They'll try it late tonight. The man actually doing it is not a member. His name is Herb Lackmore or Luckmore and with the equipment they're providing him he doesn't need to be an accurate shot." DeWinter added, "The equipment, what they call a *boulder*, was paid for by George Walt, those two mutants who own the Golden Door."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tito Cravelli said, "I see." There goes my post as Attorney General, he said to himself. "Where can I find this Lackmore right now?"

"In his conapt in Oakland, California. Probably eating dinner; it's about six, there."

From the locked closet of his office Tito Cravelli got a collapsible high-powered scope-sight laser rifle; he folded it up and stuffed it into pocket, out of sight. Such a rifle was strictly illegal, but that hardly mattered right now; what Cravelli intended to do was against the law with any kind of weapon.

But it was already too late to get Lackmore or Luckmore or whatever his name was. By the time he reached the West Coast Lackmore would certainly be gone, on his way east to intercept Jim Briskin; their flights would cross, his and Lackmore's. Better to locate Briskin and stick close to him, get Lackmore when he showed up. But Herb Lackmore would not have to show up, in the strict sense, not with the variety of weapon which the mutant brtohers had provided him. He could be as far away as ten miles—and still reach Briskin.

George Walt will have to call him off, Cravelli decided. It's the only sure way—and even that is merely *relatively* sure.

I'll have to go to the satellite, he said to himself. Now. If I expect to accomplish anything at all. The mutants George Walt would not be expecting him; they had no knowledge of his ties with Jim Briskin—or so he hoped. And also, he had three individuals working for him on the satellite, three of the girls. That gave him three separate places to stay—or hide—while he was up there. Afterwards, after he took care of George Walt, it might well mean the difference in saving his life.

That, of course, would be if George Walt wouldn't do business with him, if they chose to fight it out. In a fight, they would lose; Tito Cravelli was a crack shot. And in addition the initiative would be with him.

Where was the Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite right now? Getting the evening homeopape he turned to the entertainment page. If it was, say, over India, he had no chance; he would not be able to reach the brothers in time.

The Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite, according to the time-schedule shown in the pape, was right now over Utah. By jet'ab he could reach it within three quarters of an hour.

That was soon enough.

"Thanks a lot," he said to Dave DeWinter, who stood awkwardly in the middle of the office wearing his splendid green and silver CLEAN uniform. "You trot on back to Engel. I'll keep in touch

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with you." He left the office on a dead run, then, racing down the stairs to the ground floor.

Presently he was on his way to the satellite.

When the jet'ab had landed at the field, Cravelli hurried down the ramp, purchased a ticket from the nude, golden-haired attendant, and then rushed through gate five, searching for Francy's door. 705, it was—or so he recalled, but under so much tension he felt rattled. With five thousand doors spread out in corridor after corridor—and all around him, on every side, the animated pics of the girls twisted and chirped, trying to snare his attention and entice him to the joys inside.

I'll have to consult the satellite's directory, he decided. That would waste precious time, but what alternative did he have? Feverishly, he loped down the corridor until he arrived at the immensely extensive, cross-indexed, illuminated directory board, with all its names winking on and off as rooms emptied and refilled, as customers hurried in and out.

It was 507 and it was empty of customers.

When he opened the door Francy said, *"Hello!"* and sat up, then, blinking in surprise to see him. "Mr. Cravelli," she said uncertainly. "Is everything all right?" She slid from the bed, wearing a pale smock of some cheap thin material, and came hesitantly up to him, her body bare and smooth. "What can I do for you? Are you here for—"

"Not on pleasure," Tito Cravelli informed her. "Button up your damn smock and listen to me. Is there any way you can get George Walt up here?"

Francy pondered. "They never visit a crib normally. I—"

"Suppose there was trouble. A customer refusing to pay."

"No. A bouncer would show up then. But Geroge Walt would come here if they thought the FBI or some other police agency had moved in here and was officially arresting us girls." She pointed to an obscure button on the wall. "For such an emergency. They have a regular neurosis about the police; they think it's bound to come, sooner or later—they must have a guilty conscience about it. That button connects to that great big office of theirs."

"Ring the button," Cravelli said, and got out his laser rifle; seating himself on Francy's bed he began to assemble it.

Minutes passed.

Standing uneasily at the door, listening, Francy said, "What's going to happen in here, Mr. Cravelli? I hope there's no —"

"Be quiet," he said sharply.

The door of the room opened.

The mutants George Walt stood in the entrance, one hand on the knob, the other three gripping short lengths of metal piping.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tito Cravelli leveled the laser rifle and said, "My intention is not to kill both of you but merely one of you. That'll leave the other with half a dead brain, one dead eye, and a deteriorating body attached to him. I don't think you'd appreciate that. Can you threaten me with anything equally dreadful? I seriously doubt it."

After a pause one of them—he did not know which—said, "What—do you want?" The face was twisting and livid, the two eyes, not in unison, staring, one of them at Tito, the other at his laser rifle.

"Come in and close the door," Tito Cravelli said.

"Why?" George Walt demanded. "What's this all about, anyhow?"

"Just come on in," Tito said, and waited.

The mutants entered. The door shut after them and they stood facing him, still gripping the three lengths of metal piping. "This is George," the head said presently. "Who are you? Let's be reasonable; if you're dissatisfied with the service you've received from this woman—no, can't you see this is a strong-arm robbery?" the head interrupted itself as the other brother took control of the vocal apparatus. "He's here to rob us; he brought that weapon with him, didn't he?"

"You're going to get in touch with Verne Engel," Tito said. "And he's going to get in touch with his gunsel, Herbert Lackmore. Together you're going to call this Lackmore back in. We'll do it from your offiec; obviously we can't call from this woman's crib." To Francy he said, "You go ahead of them, lead the way. Start now, please. There's no excess of time." Within him his pyloric valve began to writhe in spasms; he gritted his teeth and for an instant shut his eyes.

A length of piping whistled past his head.

Tito Cravelli fired the laser rifle at George Walt. One of the two bodies sagged, hit in the shoulder; it was wounded but not dead. "You see?" Cravelli said. "It would be terrible the the one of you that survived."

"Yes," the head said, bobbing up and down in a grotesque, pumpkin-like fit of nodding. "We'll work with you, whoever you are. We'll call Engel; we can get this all straightened out. Please." Both eyes, each fixed on a different spot, bulged in glazed fear. The right one, on the same side as the laser-wound, had become opaque with pain.

"Good enough," Tito Cravelli said. He thought, I may be Attorney General yet. Herding them with his laser rifle, he moved George Walt toward the door.

The weapon which Herb Lackmore had been provided with con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tained a costly replica of the encephalic wave-pattern of James Briskin. He needed merely to place it within a few miles of Briskin, screw in the handle and then, with a switch, detonate it.

It was a mechanism, he decided, which supplied little if any personal satisfaction. However, at least it would do the job and that, in the long run, was all that counted. And certainly it insured his personal escape, or at least greatly aided it.

At this moment, nine o'clock at night, Jim Briskin sat upstairs in a room at the Galton Plaza Hotel, in Chicago, conferring with aides and idea-men; pickets of CLEAN, parading before the notably first-class hotel, had seen him enter and had conveyed the word to Lackmore.

I'll do it at exactly nine-fifteen, Lackmore decided. He sat in the back of a rented wheel, the mechanism assembled beside him; it was no larger than a football but rather heavy. It hummed faintly, off-key.

I wonder where the funds for this apparatus appeared from, he wondered. Because these items cost a hell of a lot, or so I've read.

He was, a few minutes later, just making the final preparatory adjustments when two dark, massive, upright shapes materialized along the nocturnal sidewalk close beside the wheel. The shapes appeared to be wearing green and silver uniforms which sparkled faintly, like moonlight.

Cautiously, with a near-Psionic sense of suspicion, Lackmore rolled down the wheel window. "What do you want?" he asked the two CLEAN members.

"Get out," one of them said brusquely.

"Why?" Lackmore froze, did not budge. Could not.

"There's been an alteration of plans. Engel just now buzzed us on the portable seek-com. You're to give that *boulder* back to us."

"No," Lackmore said. Obviously, the CLEAN movement had at the last moment sold out; he did not know exactly why but there it was. The assassination would not take place as planned—that was all he knew, all he cared about. Rapidly, he began to screw the handle in.

"Engel says to forget it!" the other CLEAN man shouted. "Don't you understand?"

"I understand," Lackmore said, and groped for the detonating switch.

The door of his wheel popped open. One of the CLEAN men grabbed him by the collar, yanked him from the back seat and dragged him kicking and thrashing from the wheel and out onto the sidewalk. The other snatched up the *boulder*, the expensive weapon, from him and swiftly, expertly, unscrewed the detonating handle.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lackmore bit and fought. He did not give up.

It did him no good. The CLEAN man with the *boulder* had already disappeared into the night darkness; along with the weapon he had vanished—the *boulder,* and all of Lackmore's tireless, busy, brooding plans, had gone.

"I'll kill you," Lackmore panted futilely, struggling with the fat, powerful CLEAN man who had hold of him.

"You'll kill nobody, fella," the CLEAN man answered, and increased his pressure on Lackmore's throat.

It was not an even fight; Herb Lackmore had no chance. He had sat at a government desk, stood idly behind a counter, too many years.

Calmly, with clear enjoyment, the CLEAN man made mincemeat out of him.

For someone supposedly devoted to the cult of non-violence it was amazing how good he was at it.

From the two mutants' plush, Titan elk-beetle fuzz carpeted office, Tito Cravelli vidphoned Jim Briskin at the Galton Plaza Hotel in Chicago. "Are you all right?" he inquired. One of the Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite's nurses was engaged in attempting futilely to bind up the injured brother with a dermofax pack; she worked silently, as Cravelli held the laser rifle and Francy stood by the office door with a pistol which Tito had located in the brothers' desk.

"I'm all right," Briskin said, puzzled. He evidently could see around Tito, past him to George Walt.

Tito said, "I've got a snake by the tail here and I can't let go. You have any suggestions? I've prevented your assassination, but how the heck am I going to get out of here?" He was beginning to become really worried.

After meditating, Briskin said, "I could ask the Chicago police —"

"Niddy," Cravelli said, in derision. "They wouldn't come." He knew that for a certainty. "They have no jurisdiction up here; that's been tested countless times—this isn't part of the United States, even, let alone Chicago."

Briskin said, "All right. I can send some party volunteers up to help you. They'll go where I say. We have a few who've clashed on the streets with Engel's organization; they might know exactly what to do."

"That's more like it," Cravelli said, relieved. But his stomach was still killing him; he could scarcely stand the pain and he wondered if there were any way he could obtain a glass of milk. "The tension's getting me down," he said. "And I haven't had my dinner. They'll have to get up here pretty soon or frankly I'm going to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fold up. I thought of taking George Walt off the satellite entirely, but I'm afraid I'd never get them to the launch field. We'd have to pass too many Golden Door employees on the way."

"You're directly over N'York now," Jim Briskin said. "So it won't take too long to get a few people there. How many do you want?"

"Certainly at least a hopper-load. Actually, all you can spare. You don't want to lose your future Attorney General, do you?"

"Not especially." Briskin seemed calm, but his dark eyes were bright. He plucked at his great handlebar mustache, then, pondering. "Maybe I'll come along," he decided.

"Why?"

"To make sure you get away."

"It's up to you," Cravelli said. "But I don't recommend it. Things are somewhat hot, up here. Do you know any girls at the satellite who could lead you through to George Walt's office?"

"No," Jim Briskin said. And then a peculiar expression appeared on his face. "Wait. I know one. She was down here in Chicago today but perhaps she's gone back up again."

"Probably has," Cravelli said. "They flit back and forth like lightning bugs. Take a chance on it, anyhow. I'll see you. And watch your step." He rang off, at that point.

As he started to board the big jet-bus, which was filled with R.-L. volunteers, Jim Briskin found himself facing two familiar figures.

"You can't go to the satellite," Sal Heim said, stopping him. Beside him Patricia stood somberly in her long coat, shivering in the evening wind that drew in off the lakes. "It's too dangerous . . . I know George Walt better than you do—remember? After all, I had you figured for a business deal with them; that was to be my contribution."

Pat said, "If you go there, Jim, you'll never come back. I know it. Stay here with me." She caught hold of his arm, but he tugged loose.

"I have to go," he told her. "My gunsel is there and I have to get him away; he's done too much for me just to leave him there."

"I'll go instead of you," Sal Heim said.

"Thanks." It was a good offer, well meant. But—he had to repay Tito Cravelli for what he'd done; obviously he had to see that Tito got safely away from the Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite. It was as simple as that. "The best I can offer you," he said, "is the opportunity to ride along." He meant it ironically.

"All right," Sal said, nodding. "I'll come with you." To Pat he said, "But you stay down below here. If we get back we should be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

showing up right away—or not at all. Come on, Jim." He climbed the steps into the jet-bus, joining the others already there.

"Take care of yourself," Pat said to Jim Briskin.

"What did you think of my speech?" he asked her.

"I was in the tub; I only heard part of it. But I *think* it was the best you ever made. Sal said so, too, and he heard it all. Now he knows he made a terrific mistake; he should have stuck with you."

"Too bad he didn't," Jim said.

"You wouldn't say something along the lines of 'better late than —' "

"Okay," he said. "Better late than never." Turning, he followed Sal Heim onto the jet-bus. He had said it, but it was not true. Too much had happened; too late was too late. He and Sal had split forever. And both of them knew it . . . or rather feared it. And sought instinctively for a new rapprochement without having any idea how it could be done.

As the jet-bus whirled upward in brisk ascent, Sal leaned over and said, "You've accomplished a lot since I saw you last, Jim. I want to congratulate you. And I'm not being ironic. Hardly that."

"Thanks," Jim Briskin said, briefly.

"But you'll never forgive me for handing you my resignation when I did, will you? Well, I can't really blame you." Sal was silent, then. "You could have been Secretary of State," Jim said.

Sal nodded. "But that's the way the fifty yarrow stalks fall. Anyhow, I hope you win, Jim. I know you will, after that speech; that certainly was a masterpiece of promising everything to everybody —a billion gold chickens in a billion gold pots. Needless to say I think you'll make a superb president. One we all can be proud of." He grinned warmly. "Or am I making you sick?"

The Moments of Bliss satellite lay directly ahead of them; in the center of the breast-shaped landing field the winking pink nipple guided their vehicle to its landing, a mammary invitation beckoning to all. The principle of Yin, out in space, inflated to cosmic proportions.

"It's a wonder George Walt can perambulate," Jim said. "Joined at the base of the skull, the way they are. Must be damn awkward."

"What's your point?" Sal sounded tense and irritable, now.

Jim Briskin said, "No particular point. But you'd think one would have sacrificed the other long ago, for purposes of utility."

"Have you ever actually seen them?"

"No." He had never even been to the satellite.

"They're fond of each other," Sal Heim said.

The jet-bus began to settle onto the landing field of the satellite;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the spin of the satellite provided its constant magnetic flux, sufficient to hold smaller objects to it, and Jim Briskin thought. That's where we made our mistake. We should never have allowed this place to become attractive—in any sense whatsoever. It was feeble wit, but the best he could manage under the circumstances. Maybe Pat's right, he realized. Maybe I—and Sal Heim—will never return from this place. It was not the sort of thought he enjoyed thinking; the Golden Door satellite was not at all the kind of place he wanted to wind up. Ironic that I should be going here now, for the first time, under these circumstances, he said to himself.

The doors of the jet-bus slid back as the bus rolled to a halt.

"Here we are," Sal Heim said, and got quickly to his feet. "And here we go." Along with the party volunteers he moved toward the nearest exit. Jim Briskin, after a moment, followed.

At the entrance gate the pretty, dark-haired, unclad attendant on duty smiled a white-tooth smile at them and said, "Your tickets, please."

"We're all new here," Sal Heim said to her, getting out his wallet. "We'll pay in cash."

"Are there any girls you wish to visit in particular?" the attendant asked, as she rang the money up on her register.

Jim Briskin said, "A girl named Sparky Rivers."

"ALL OF YOU?" The attendant blinked, then shrugged her bare shoulders urbanely. "All right, gentlemen. De gustibus non disputandum est. Gate three. Watch your step and don't jostle, please. She's in room 395." She pointed toward gate three and the group moved in that direction.

Ahead, beyond gate three, Jim Briskin saw rows of gilded, shining doors; over some lights glowed and he understood that those were empty at the moment of customers. And, on each door, he saw the curious animated pic of the girl within; the pics called, enticed, whined at them as they approached each in turn, searching for room 395.

"Hi, there!"

"Hello, big fellow."

"Could you hurry? I'm waiting . . ."

"Well, how are *you*?"

Sal Heim said, "It's down this way. But you don't need her, Jim; I can take you to their office."

Can I trust you? Jim Briskin asked himself silently. "All right," he said. And hoped it was a wise choice.

"This elevator," Sal said. "Press the button marked C." He entered the elevator; the rest of the group followed, crowding in after him, as many as could make it. More than half the group remained outside in the corridor. "You follow

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

us," Sal instructed them. "As soon as you can."

Jim touched the C button and the elevator door shut soundlessly. "I'm depressed," he said to Sal. "I don't know why."

"It's this place," Sal said. "It isn't your style at all, Jim. Now, if you were a necktie or a flatware or a poriferous vobile salesman, you'd like it. You'd be up here every day, health permitting."

"I don't believe so," Jim said. "No matter what line of work I was in." It went against everything ethical—and esthetic—in his makeup.

The elevator door slid back.

"Here we are," Sal said. "This is George Walt's private office." He spoke matter of factly. "Hello, George Walt," he said, and stepped out of the elevator.

The two mutants sat at their big cherrywood desk in their specially constructed wide couch. One of the bodies sagged like a limp sack and one eye had become fused-over and empty, lolling as it focussed on nothing.

In a shrill voice the head said, "He's dying. I think he's even dead; you know he's dead." The active eye fixed malignantly on Tito Cravelli, who stood with his laser rifle, on the far side of the office. In despair one of the living hands poked at the dangling, inert arm of its companion body. "Say something!" the head screeched. With immense difficulty the living body struggled to its feet; now its silent companion flopped against it and in horror it pushed the burdening, lifeless sack away.

A faint spasm of life stirred the dangling sack; it was not quite dead. And, on the face of the uninjured brother, wild hope appeared. At once it tottered grotesquely toward the door.

"Run!" the head bleated, and clumsily groped for escape. "You can make it!" it urged its still-living companion. The four-legged, scrambling joint creature bowled over the surprised volunteers at the door; together they all went down in a floundering heap, the mutant among them, squealing in panic as the injured body buried the other beneath it, struggling to rise.

Jim Briskin, as George Walt lurched upright, dived at them. He caught hold of an arm and hung on.

The arm came off.

He held onto it as George Walt stumbled up to their four feet and out the office door, into the corridor beyond.

Staring down at it he said, "The thing's artificial." He handed it to Sal Heim.

"So it is," Sal agreed, stonily. Tossing the arm aside he hastily ran after George Walt; Jim accompanied him and together they followed the mutants along the thick-carpeted corridor. The three-armed organism moved badly, crashing into itself as its twin

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bodies swung first wide apart and then stunningly together. It sprawled, then, and Sal Heim seized the righthand body around the waist.

The entire body came loose, arm and legs and trunk. But without the head. The other body—and single head—managed, incredibly, to get up and continue on.

George Walt was not a mutant at all. It—he—was an ordinarily-constituted individual. Jim Briskin and Sal watched him go, his two legs pumping vigorously, arms swinging.

After a long time Jim said, "Let's—get out of here."

"Right." Nodding in agreement, Sal turned to the party volunteers who had trickled out into the corridor behind them. Tito Cravelli emerged from the office, rifle in hand; he saw the severed one-armed trunk which had been half of the two mutants, glanced up swiftly with perceptive understanding as the remaining portion disappeared from view past a corner of the corridor.

"We'll never catch them now," Tito said.

"*Him*," Sal Heim corrected bitingly. "I wonder which one of them was synthetic, George or Walt. And why did he do it? I don't understand."

Tito said, "A long time ago one must have died."

They both stared at him.

"Sure," Tito said calmly. "What happened here today must have happened before. They were mutants, all right, joined from birth, and then the one body perished and the surviving one quickly had this synthetic section built. It couldn't have gone on alone without the symbiotic arrangement because the brain—" He broke off. "You saw what it did to the surviving one just now; he suffered terribly. Imagine how it must have been the first time when—"

"But he survived it," Sal pointed out.

"Good for him," Tito said, without irony. "I'm frankly glad he did; he deserved to." Kneeling down, he inspected the trunk. "It looks to me as if this is George. I hope he can get it restored. In time." He rose, then. "Let's get upstairs and back to the field; I want to get out of here." He shivered. "And then I want a glass of warm, non-fat milk. A big one."

The three of them, with the party volunteers struggling behind, made their way silently back to the elevator. No one stopped them. The corridor, mercifully, was empty. Without even a pic to leer and cajole at them.

When they arrived back in Chicago, Patricia Heim met them and at once said, "Thank God." she put her arms around her husband and he hugged her tight. "What happened? It seemed to take so long,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and yet actually it wasn't long at all; you've only been gone an hour."

"I'll tell you later," Sal said shortly. "Right now I just want to take it easy."

"Maybe I'll cease advocating shutting the Golden Door satellite down," Jim said suddenly.

"What?" Sal said, astonished.

"I may have been too hard. Too puritanical. I'd prefer not to take away his livelihood; it seems to me he's earned it." He felt numb right now, unable really to think about it. But what had shocked him the most, changed him, had not been the sight of George Walt coming apart into two entities, one artificial, one genuine. It had been Lurton Sands' disclosure about the mass of maimed bibs.

He had been thinking about this, trying to see a way out. Obviously, if the maimed bibs were to be awakened at all they would have to be last in sequence. And by then perhaps replacement organs would be available in supply from the UN's organ bank. But there was another possibility, and he had come onto it only just now. *George Walt's corporate existence proved the workability of wholly mechanical organs.* And in this Jim Briskin saw hope for Lurton Sands' victims. Possibly a deal could be made with George Walt; he—or they—would be left alone if they would reveal the manufacturer of their highly sophisticated and successful artificial components. It was, most likely, a West German firm; the cartels were most advanced in such experimentation. But it could of course be engineers under contract to the satellite alone, in permanent residence there. In any case four hundred lives represented a great number, worth any effort at saving. Worth any deal, he decided, with George Walt which could be brought off.

"Let's get something warm to drink," Pat said. "I'm freezing." She started toward the front door of Republican-Liberal party headquarters, key in hand. "We can fix some synthetic non-toxic coffee inside."

As they stood around the coffee pot waiting for it to heat, Tito said, "Why not let the satellite decline naturally? As emigration begins it can serve a steadily dwindling market. You implied something along those lines in your Chicago speech anyhow."

"I've been up there before," Sal said, "as you know. And it didn't kill me. Tito's been there before, too, and it didn't warp or kill him."

"Okay, okay," Jim said. "If George Walt leave me alone I'll leave them alone. But if they keep after me, or if they won't make a deal regarding artif-org construction—then it'll be necessary to do something. In any case the welfare of those four hundred bibs comes first."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Coffee's ready," Pat said, and began pouring.

Sipping, Sal Heim said, "Tastes good."

"Yes," Jim Briskin agreed. In fact the cup of hot coffee, synthetic and non-toxic as it had to be (only low-stratum dorm-housed Cols drank the genuine thing) was exactly what he needed. It made him feel a lot better.

In November, despite the abusive telecasts from the Golden Door Moments of Bliss satellite, or because of them, Jim Briskin succeeded in nosing out the incumbent Bill Schwarz and thereby won for himself the presidential election.

So now, at long last, about a hundred years later than it should have come about, Salisbury Heim said to himself, we have a Negro President of the United States. A new epoch in human understanding has finally arrived. At least, he thought, let's hope so.

"What we need," Patricia said meditatively as they examined a tally of the last, belated returns, "is a party so we can celebrate."

"I'm too tired to celebrate," Sal said. "One beer, maybe. And then home to bed."

Outside on the sidewalk a crowd of well-wishers yelled up slogans of congratulation; the racket filtered into campaign headquarters and Sal Heim went to glance out the window.

A vote for Jim Briskin, he thought, recalling the cliches of the campaign, *is a vote for humanity.* Stale already, and always over-simplified, and yet deep underneath substantially true. So perhaps the whole long fracas had been worthwhile.

His big feet up on the arm of a couch, Phil Danville said, "It was my majestic speeches that did it for you, Jim. Now, what's my reward?" He grinned. "I'm waiting."

"Nothing on Earth could ever be sufficient reward for such an accomplishment," Jim Briskin said absently.

"Look at him," Danville said to Dorothy Gill. "He's not happy, not even now. He's going to ruin Pat's party."

"I won't wreck the mood of the party," Jim assured them, drawing himself up dutifully. After all, they were right; this was *the* moment. But actually the great historic instant had for him already begun to slide away and disappear; it was too elusive, too subtly interwoven into the texture of commonplace reality. And in addition the problems awaiting him seemed to efface his recognition of anything else. Yet that was how it had to be.

A Secret Serviceman approached him. "Mr. Briskin, we've intercepted a man outside in the hall wishing to speak with you."

"A well-wisher," Pat said.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"An assassin," Tito said, groping instantly in his coat for his gun.

"No," the Secret Serviceman said. "Some guy here on business."

Opening the hall door Jim looked out. It was not a well-wisher or an assassin, as the Secret Serviceman had correctly said. The man waiting to see him, portly and short, wearing a vest, was Bruno Mini.

Hand extended, Mini said enthusiastically, "It certainly took me a long time to catch up with you, Mr. President Elect; I've been trying throughout the campaign." At once he rooted in his overstuffed briefcase. "You and I have a tremendous amount of vital business to transact, sir. I can now reveal to you that the initial planet I've planned on—and this will no doubt come to you as a surprise—is Uranus. 'Way out there and big, oh so big. Now, you'll naturally ask me why."

"No," Jim said. "I won't ask you why." He felt resigned. Sooner or later, even after the discovery of the untouched world, into which the first lines of Terran emigrants had already begun to move, Mini *had* to catch up with him. In fact it was virtually a relief. Such things in life were foreordained; he could see it in Mini's red, excited face and bulging eyes.

"Let me describe the advantages of Uranus," Mini burbled, and began handing Jim an overwhelming barrage of documents from his briefcase, one after another, as rapidly as possible.

It will be a difficult four years, Jim Briskin realized somberly. Four? More likely eight.

—The way things turned out, he was correct. It was eight.

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

The Magazine of FANTASY and SCIENCE FICTION will follow you anywhere providing you let us know six weeks in advance. Please be sure to give us your old address as well as the new one, and add the ZIP number. (If convenient, send the address label from the wrapper of the next copy of F&SF you receive.)

Subscription Service
MERCURY PUBLICATIONS
347 East 53 Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In our own story, KING'S EVIL (F&SF, Oct. 1956), mention was made of of the first *"Philadelphia experiment"—of which every school-child knows—kites, keys, thunder and lightning. Up till now, however, that this experiment had not been the last, efcap'd the publick Knowledge. We will say no more, but allow the reader to read on . . . perhaps rueful and regretful that the subject of the knowledge was ever discovered at all.*

The Second Philadelphia Experiment

by Robert F. Young

(NOTE: WITH THE EXCEPTION *of the opening paragraph, which is included to indicate the probable chronological point in the Autobiography at which the pages dealing with the second Philadelphia experiment originally occurred, the following document has never before been published. Why, after removing the pages from the rest of his manuscript, Dr. Franklin did not burn them in keeping with his intention, is anybody's guess, and how they could have gone undiscovered for so many years is a mystery which will probably never be resolved. In any event, the account of the second Philadelphia experiment has finally come to light, happily providing us with an instance of the Grem-Overby Audio-Temporal Throwback Principle in action—an instance that predates the discovery of the principle by over three hundred years.*)

What gave my book* the more sudden and general celebrity was the success of one of its proposed experiments, made by Messrs. Dalibard and De Lor at Marly, for drawing lightning from the clouds. This engag'd the public attention every where. M. de Lor,

* *A pamphlet on the sameness of lightning and electricity, published in England circa 1752.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who had an apparatus for experimental philosophy, and lectur'd in that branch of science, undertook to repeat what he called the *Philadelphia Experiments;* and, after they were performed before the king and court, all the curious of Paris flocked to see them. I will not swell this narrative with an account of that capital experiment, nor of the infinite pleasure I receiv'd in the success of a similar one I made soon after with a kite at Philadelphia, as both are to be found in the histories of electricity.

I would like, however, to make some mention of a second experiment which I conduct'd not long after that time in the privacy of my home and which result'd in a most singular phenomenon. In anticipation of the noble uses to which electricity will some day be put, I had for some time been seeking to improve upon the Leyden jar in the hope of applying my discovery toward some practical purpose, and to this end I had devis'd a sort of super-jar from a large and thick-walled demijohn, which I had previously stripp'd of its wicker casing. The intervening years have dimm'd my memory insofar as the exact arrangement of the apparatus which I then assembl'd is concern'd, but I do recall that in addition to the Leyden jar it consist'd among other things of a glass lamp chimney, a quartz paper-weight, a brass doorkey, a kite, a tuning fork, an iron grille, and two pewter plates. I had sent the kite and key aloft earlier in the evening, having first ascertain'd that there was a good likelihood of a thunderstorm, and I purpos'd to convert the electrical fluid which would drench the immediate area once the key procur'd lightning from the clouds, into light.

The apparatus assembl'd to my satisfaction, I sat down before my work table to wait. Distant rumblings of thunder sound'd, and occasionally the darkness beyond the windows leap'd into brief and blinding brightness. Not wishing to jeopardize the safety of any of the members of my family, I had arrang'd matters so that none of them would be present during the experiment, and hence I had the entire house to myself.

The rumbling grew in volume, and the brightnesses increas'd both in frequency and in intensity. I had to proceed on the assumption that the kite was still aloft, since were I to leave the apparatus the moment for which I eagerly wait'd might come and go during my absence, leaving me no more enlighten'd than I had been before. The thought that I might be playing with forces the true nature of which I could not even guess at cross'd my mind, but I did not let it dissuade me from my purpose, having come to the conclusion during the course of previous experiments that all worthwhile un-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dertakings are accompani'd by an element of risk.

The lightning bolt which the key attract'd took me unawares when it came, and the thunder that follow'd shook the house. The glass lamp-chimney shatter'd, whether from the vibration occasion'd by the thunder or from the actual functioning of the apparatus, I have never been able to determine, but in either case my attempt to convert electrical fluid into light did not bear fruit. However, while the experiment fail'd to gain its desired end, it was not altogether without results, for the tuning fork was quivering erratically, and when the sound of thunder fad'd away, a voice could be heard—a loud presumptuous voice that brought me to my feet.

At first I thought that someone had slipp'd into the room and was addressing me, but a glance around inform'd me that such was not the case, and I could only conclude that my apparatus was in some way responsible for the sounds I was hearing. The invisible speaker spoke only a few slurred words, and then another speaker—or possibly a singer—took over and began caterwauling at the top of his hobble-dehoyish voice to the accompaniment of a medley of sounds that I can only describe as a series of throbs, thrums, ard twangs. I subsequently transcrib'd the spoken sounds from memory:

First Voice:—to the Dick the Disk Show, brought to you by W-D-U.

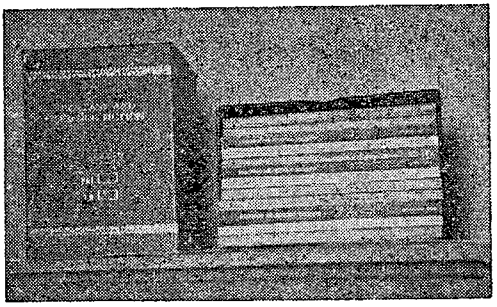
Second voice: BABYBABY-BABYBABYBABYBABYBABY-BABYBABYBABYBABYBABY-BABYBABYBABY HUH-WON-CHUWONCHUWONCHU-WONCHUWONCHUWON-CHUWONCHUWONCHU-WONCHUWONCHU CUMMA-ONAONAONAONAONAONA-ONAONAONAONA HO—HUM! BABYBABYBABYBABY-BABYBABYBABY—

It was at this point that a fit of trembling seiz'd me, causing me to lurch against the table. The impact dislodg'd my apparatus, and grille, Leyden jar, pewter plates, &c went crashing to the floor. Immediately, the caterwauling ceas'd, and a blessed silence filled the room.

I was unnerv'd all the rest of the evening, and I resolv'd never to try the experiment again. Recently I came across a possible explanation for its bizarre results in a paper written by a little-known French metaphysicist named M. de Vrains. According to M. de Vrains, the aether acts as a storage place for sounds and contains all of the sounds that have ever been creat'd on Earth. Occasionally, "downdrafts" occur, and bear some of these sounds back to earth, where they are heard by "preternatural people." I consider M. de Vrains' theroy to be medieval non-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sense for the most part, but I do think that he has hit upon a half-truth (that is to say that his basic idea is correct, but that other forces are at work of which he is totally ignorant), and I have come to the conclusion that my apparatus some how occasion'd one of these "downdrafts" and briefly expos'd my eardrums to the tortured wails of a victim of a long-ago puberty rite. M. de Vrains makes the further suggestion that the aether may not be subject to time and that the sounds stor'd in it may comprise not only all of the sounds that have ever been creat'd on earth but all of the sounds that ever *will* be created on earth. This, of course, is arrant nonsense. Certain of the words I heard do not lend themselves to a primitive past, but neither do they lend themselves to a civilized future. It may very well be that M. de Vrains might think they do, however, and use them to substantiate his theory. Which is why I have just decid'd to remove this account of the second Philadelphia experiment from my papers and burn it.



Handsome, Sturdy

VOLUME FILES

for Your Copies of

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

Each Volume File will keep 12 copies of FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION clean, orderly, and readily accessible. Sturdily built, the files are covered with a rich black and red washable leatherette, and the lettering is in 16-carat gold leaf.

Reasonably priced at $2.50 each, 3 for $7.00, or 6 for $13.00, they are shipped fully prepaid on a money back basis if not satisfactory. Order direct from: JESSE JONES BOX CORPORATION

Dept. F&SF P.O. Box 5120 Philadelphia 41, Pa

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BALLOON ASTRONOMY

by Theodore L. Thomas

THE SCIENCE OF STUDYING stars and other extraterrestrial objects from a position outside the Earth's atmosphere is called space astronomy. And when you make your observations from a balloon hanging high in the stratosphere, you are working in the branch of space astronomy called balloon astronomy. Balloon astronomy is a booming young science. Look at Stratoscope I.

Stratoscope I was a combination of a 12-inch reflecting telescope, some auxiliary hardware, and a whopping polyethylene balloon, all at 80,000 feet. It took some of the finest pictures of the surface of the sun that have ever been taken. This was not much of a surprise to anybody. Once you lift your camera and telescope above the turbulent, seething mass of air and water that makes up the Earth's atmosphere, you are almost bound to improve your pictures.

But just because you get good pictures of the sun, you are by no means out of the woods as far as balloon astronomy is concerned. The brilliant sun is one thing. The dim, night-time objects are quite another. You have to do a great deal more than simply heist your camera and telescope and start taking pictures. You have to set up to take time exposures. And that's just what Stratoscope II does.

Stratoscope II has a 36-inch mirror mounted in an exceedingly complex structure involving mercury-film bearings, a pre-cooling system for the mirror, and a highly refined control system to keep the telescope trained on a dim object. It is beginning to work, too. Dangling from a Mylar and Dacron balloon having an overall length of 480 feet, the 3½ ton telescope system has begun to take meaningful pictures.

But maybe we are misusing the system. With such ability to maintain a line of sight, possibly the system should be positioned on the sunlit side of the Earth. The telescope could focus sunlight, and the concentrated sunlight beam could be used to pump a gas laser. This would produce an almost steady stream of intense, coherent light that could be directed down to receiving stations on the surface. The beam could be modulat-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ed by measurements taken of cloud cover, wind velocity, water content, air pressure, temperature, and everything else that delights the meteorologists' hearts. The beam would be immune from static and fade-outs, and would penetrate most clouds. We would have one of the finest weather data collecting stations available.

THE SCIENTIST AND THE MONSTER

by Gahan Wilson

A SCIENTIST SET OUT TO BUILD AND bring to life a new and superior sort of human being. He visualized it as being an example to the rest of us which would show the way to a better life, progress and possibly even peace on Earth.

Unfortunately, although he had the best intentions, the scientist blundered seriously at a few crucial points, and economized a bit too much on materials. The disappointing result could only be described as a monster.

The scientist, who had hidden himself in a closet the moment the monster had begun to stir, peeked out in dismay and watched the creature stagger exploratively about the laboratory. The thing was hideous, and the scientist felt a terrible guilt at having constructed it.

"What right had I," he asked himself, "To play God and bring this poor, twisted creature into suffering existence?"

Through tears of repentance, the scientist saw in sudden horror that the monster had discovered a full-length mirror hanging at one end of the laboratory and was clumping toward it.

"How terrible!" groaned the scientist. "What will happen when the pathetic being sees his ghastly image in the glass?"

The monster stood before the mirror a minute or so and then, with little coos of delight, began to mince up and down before it, turning and posturing as it did so. When the scientist leaned out of the closet a little further, so as to better observe this phenomenon, the monster saw him and ran shrieking and gagging from the room.

Moral: *Many people you feel sorry for would seriously wonder why.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Young Mrs. Toni Heller Lamb received her first rejection slip from F&SF when she was thirteen years old, and since then has been "not necessarily in order of appearance, a dancer, an actress, a ballet teacher, a file clerk, a B-girl, an invalid, and a wife. I showed great promise in all of these professions." Considering that Mrs. L. is now twenty years old, it is obvious that she has not been idle. The heroine of this, her first published story, is probably less than thirteen, and would appear to have a career even more curious than her creatrix's . . . and not one likely to appeal to most. By the time you read this, Mrs. Lamb (she is married to a musician and lives in a Lower East Side garret) "should be the mother of a baby. If it turns out to be a rabbit, I'll be awfully mad." Boy or bunny, coney or colleen, we think you'll agree that writing is another profession at which she shows great promise.

THE HAPPY PLACE

by Toni Heller Lamb

WHEN I LIVED IN THE CEMETERY it was the best part of the year. It was right after summer, when the trees and things were still green, but the wind was cool even on sunny days. There were lots of hills and trees there, all green except for the white tombstones and crypts. Some of the trees had big purple flowers. I used to like to climb a big forked tree on top of one of the hills and look down at the tall grass waving back and forth on the grave mounds.

There were a lot of real old graves and monuments that nobody took care of anymore. You could tell if a plot was being mowed and watered because the gravestone would have a little orange dot on the back. I lived in a place nobody took care of anymore.

I used to live with my grandma. She took care of me after my mother and father died. We lived in a big old house with an attic. I didn't have to go to school either. She said that the schools

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there didn't teach any good, so she taught me herself. Whenever anybody came around I went upstairs till they went away. I didn't go out much in the daytime anyway. Then my grandma died.

She got sick, and I had to make the beds and cook the food she ate for a couple of days. And then she just said to me, I'm going to die. I knew she was, too, by the way she said it. Very serious and sad. But before I die, she said, I must tell you what to do. Because the census taker will come for you and take you to someplace where everything will be terrible. And she told me where my parents were buried, and how to get in, and stuff.

It was so beautiful in the cemetery. I stayed in a little stone house next to my parents' graves. It had kind of shelves where people were buried that had been in the same family. There was a little chair made of stone that I could sit on, and a lovely window. It was a stained glass window showing a tree and a hill, and the colors made rainbow shadows on the floor at sundown. It was warm there, and nice to sleep in.

There were other little houses. I knew they were only fancy graves, but I used to pretend that other people lived there. I used to wish that they would come over to visit me, sometimes. But they never did. When I slept I dreamed that people were there, and were my friends. They were never there when I woke up.

If there had been others, we could have played hide-and-seek around the white tombstones. I liked the little ones where kids were buried. Once I pried one up, just to see what it was like. I guess I thought maybe one of the kids might come out if the tombstones weren't holding them down. That was stupid—nothing was under them but bugs and dirt. Everyone was dead but me. Even the fresh ones were dead.

When there were funerals I watched. Once or twice I watched up close with the other people while they covered the new coffins with dirt. But usually I hid and watched. I went after everyone was gone. There would be lovely flowers all over. I put some of them in my house.

I had a candle in a wire holder. Somebody must of put it there a long time before. I burned it at night for a little while, sometimes. I never thought about the light shining through the windows. Then one night after I had put out the candle, I heard noises outside, and voices. Somebody said, I know I saw lights. And somebody else said, Well, I don't see anything. Then I heard steps go past. After a while I figured it was safe.

A couple of nights later they came and grabbed me. I hadn't lit the candle again. I don't know

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

how they figured it out. All of a sudden flashlights shone in the window on me. Two men opened the door very slowly. One of them said, Why, it's a kid, a little girl, and the other one said, Jesus! and they came in and grabbed me. I kicked one of them hard, but they just held on to me and dragged me down to the caretaker's house. I think I fainted or something.

The next day I woke up and they took me to this orphan home. I hate the home and the people, they're horrible and stupid. They make me wear this ugly old dress with my name on it. The kids just want to play stupid games, and they act silly when I talk about the cemetery. They don't believe me. I was so happy at the cemetery. I just hate this place. It's so awful. And the food is terrible. I can't eat it and I'm always hungry. I was never hungry at the cemetery. I ate real good.

COMING NEXT MONTH

A poignant story about an unusual discovery on Mars—

WHEN THE CHANGE-WINDS BLOW
by FRITZ LEIBER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

THE MACHINERIES OF JOY, Ray Bradbury, Simon & Schuster, $4.50

The trouble with so many Ray Bradbury collections is that anyone who likes his writings is sure to come to a point where he finds collection after collection containing nothing but stories from other, previous collections. Frustrating as this is, there is a bright side to the picture—Mr. Bradbury, meanwhile, has been writing more stories and sooner or later a collection of *them* is bound to appear—in fact, as *The Machineries of Joy,* it appears now. All new, so far as I can see, to book form . . . although, come to think of it, the story about The Thing In The Well, on Mars, *The One Who Waits* . . . seems mightily familiar and is not (curiously) mentioned in the copyright acknowledgements . . . hmmm. Oh, well. Title story, title being a fictitious quotation from Blake, is about an Italian priest who welcomes, and an Irish priest who fears, the Age of Space. It reveals the interesting possibility that Bradbury, twig bent slightly differently, might have made a theologian. Eheu. Not all the stories are SF, some reflect the powerful influence of Mr. B.'s days in Dublin's fair city; others, that of Mexico, another place to which his heart seemingly responds as deeply as to Mars. Most potent of the non-SF, most potent one of all, I think, is an almost unbearably convincing short about a writer and his family who are trapped—iron teeth and bleeding flesh—in the city they forever plan to flee. Accused so often of turning his back on the present, Ray Bradbury here perhaps unconsciously and persuasively shows why. Bradbury-Playboy may be new to readers who do not follow that lavish, *luxos* market: they will want to see for themselves how he does it; and for those who like the old, familiar style, why, it is here, too. Should another title ever be sought for a future edition of this book, may I suggest one? *The 87,000 Faces of Ray Bradbury.* There's an interesting and zany cover design by Isadore Seltzer. And photogra-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pher-artist-inventor Morris Scott Dollens has a picture of the author on the inside flap of the jacket which shows an 87 thousand and first—Mad Scientist Leering Lecherously. How does Mr. Bradbury do it, boys and girls? How does he do it?

THE SEVENTH GALAXY READER, **Frederik Pohl**, ed., Doubleday, $3.95

This is one of the best of the series—perhaps the best. Contributors, in order of appearance: Algis Budrys, Ray Bradbury, Avram Davidson, Robert Bloch, Lester Del Rey, Fredric Brown, R. A. Lafferty, Fredrik Pohl, Zenna Henderson, Cordwainer Smith, Judith Merril, Keith Laumer, Fritz Leiber, Margaret St. Clair, and Damon Knight. Well, maybe it's only the best in several years; come to think of it, most of the above have written better stories for Galaxy than these here . . . only not lately. I sure like Bloch's "Crime Machine"—TV dramas many years from now relate the adventures of folk heroes such as Al Capone ("A mighty man who walked alone," from the theme song of the same name) and John Dillinger. Mr. Pohl's "Three Portraits And A Prayer" make one wish he wrote more often than he does. The Zenna Henderson story is *not* about The People, and Damon Knight is funny about a seemingly unacceptable subject.

TWELVE TALES OF SUSPENSE AND THE SUPERNATURAL, **Davis Grubb**, Scribner, $3.95

Mr. Grubb is a well-known regional writer, there is nothing wrong with this, and it is not his fault if I find myself having become some time ago surfeited with dialect stories of that great region which ranges from Appalachia to the Gulf and thence to the distantmost marches of the Texan Republic. Not all of the dozen tales here labor under that burden, but some which don't, suffer from the perhaps greater fault of being overwritten. I could mention in this particular *Where The Woodbine Twineth*, a changeling story which is all but ruined by it. Mr. Grubb is just good enough to make one sigh that he isn't just that bit better which would make him very good. His particular *pays* is the mountain-and-river country of old time West By G—! Virginia; its lore is I'm sure rich enough to be used more sparingly than Mr. Grubb delights to use it. Sorghum and the supernatural should be dripped thin, both. But, faults and all, worth reading.

—AVRAM DAVIDSON

LIFE BEYOND THE EARTH, **V. A. Firsoff**, Basic Books, $7.50

The possibility of life on other worlds is no longer the private

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speculation of science fiction fans. It is being taken up by Real Scientists in a variety of ways.

Firsoff's book, for instance, is very strong on chemistry. The first half is devoted to a quick review of the chemical basis of life (for which a chemical background would help the reader) followed by a detailed account of possible extra-terrestrial life chemistries. This latter is the most valuable part of the book, for I don't know of any other volume that goes into such detail on the possibilities of silicon life, boron life, ammonia life, even mercury bromide life.

The second half of the book deals with the other worlds of the Solar system as possible abodes of life, with a comparatively short final section on life outside the Solar system.

Firsoff is a scientific "leftist;" that is, he tends to adopt views that are not accepted by scientists in general. He plugs away for a moderate atmosphere on Mercury and a thin one on the Moon, for considerable water beneath the surface of Mars and the Moon, for a cool, Earth-like Venus even (in an appendix) in the face of the findings of Mariner II.

At all times, he tries to accept alternatives that would make life possible. In doing so, however, he is accurate in both his astronomy and chemistry, and presents the evidence to the contrary with reasonable fairness.

(His psychology is more bothersome than his physical science. He favors the concept of "mind" as a thing in itself, accepts ESP as established fact and thinks that insects show considerable signs of intelligent behavior.)

One gathers that Firsoff has not received the attention he would like to receive and he speaks occasionally, in rather wounded tones, of scientific dogmatists and of jealousy in high places. If so, some of his ruffled feathers may be smoothed by the kindly reception he is bound to get in science fiction circles. His conclusions may sometimes be questionable but they are on Our Side and we will surely find them interesting and stimulating. (In fact, serious s.f. writers should find this book invaluable for background material.)

—Isaac Asimov

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

C.S. Lewis wrote a wide and rich variety of books—the well-known Screwtape Letters *(Macmillan),* Surprised by Joy *(Harcourt),* The Case For Christianity, Out of the Silent Planet, Voyage of the Dawn Treader *(all Macmillan), the* Narnia *series of juvenile fantasies and many others. His stories in F&SF included THE SHODDY LANDS (Feb. 1956) and MINISTERING ANGELS (Jan. 1958). Professor Lewis's poem,* The Last of the Wine, *so impressed Poul Anderson that he committed it to memory. His quotations from it so impressed Mr. Edward Meskys, a New York scientist now living and working in California, that he wrote the author and obtained permission to reprint it in his amateur SF magazine,* Niekas; *and it was there that we first saw it. Professor Lewis's letter, granting permission, concluded, "I'd write more if I were not rather ill." At the time he wrote this he was in process of resigning both the professorship of medieval and Renaissance English at Cambridge and his fellowship at Magdalen College, Oxford; and the following month, on November 22, 1963, he died. This beautiful poem is, therefore, alas and indeed, literally,*

THE END OF THE WINE

You think, if we sigh as we drink the last decanter,
We're sensual topers, and thence you are ready to prose
And read your lecture. But need you? Why should you banter
Or badger us? Better imagine it thus: We'll suppose

A man to have come from Atlantis eastward sailing—
Lemuria has fallen in the fury of a tidal wave;
The cities are fallen; the pitiless, all prevailing,
Inhuman ocean is Numinor's salt grave.

To Europe he comes from Lemuria, saved from the wreck
Of the gilded, loftily builded, countless fleet
With the violet sails. A phial hangs from his neck,
Holding the last of a golden cordial, subtle and sweet.

© PUNCH, *London.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Untamed is Europe, untamed—a wet desolation.
Unwelcoming woods of the elk, of the mammoth and bear,
The fen and the forest. The men of a barbarous nation,
On the sand in a circle standing, await him there.

Horribly ridged are their foreheads. Weapons of stone,
Unhandy and blunt, they brandish in their clumsy grips.
Their females set up a screaming, their pipes drone,
They gaze and mutter. He raises his flask to his lips.

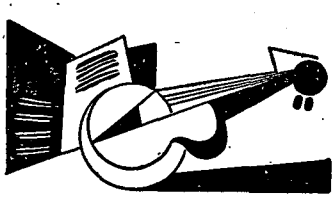
And it brings to his mind the strings, the flutes, the tabors,
How he drank with the poets at the banquet, robed and crowned;
He recalls the pillared halls carved with the labours
Of curious masters (Lemuria's cities lie drowned).

The festal nights, when each jest that flashed for a second,
Light as a bubble, was bright with a thousand years
Of nurture—the honour and the grace unreckoned
That sat like a robe on the Atlantean peers.

It has made him remember ladies and the proud glances,
Their luminous glances in Numinor and the braided hair,
The ruses and mockings, the music and the grave dances
(Where musicians played, the huge fishes goggle and stare).

So he sighs, like us; then rises and turns to meet
Those naked men. Will they make him their spoil and prey,
Or salute him as god and brutally fawn at his feet?
And which would be worse? He pitches the phial away.

—C. S. Lewis



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Concerning the man who called himself Magister Georgius Sabellicus Faustus Junior, little can be said with certainty. Fairly early in the 1500s Roman Catholics such as the Abbot of Spanheim and Canon Konrad Mudt described him merely as a despicable charlatan, a "wicked, cheating, useless and unlearned doctor." Scarcely a generation later, however, the Protestant Pastor Gast declared him to have been in league with the devil; and Melancthon, right-hand man of Luther, said that Faust had studied magic in Cracow, and was "a disgraceful beast and sewer of many devils." And there are several reports that he died of having his neck rung by Satan himself. Exit History (if such it is); enter Legend, mounting higher and higher into Art—Marlowe's The Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus, *Goethe's* Faust, *and Wagner's opera. The drunken mountebank who circumambulated the Germanies with a trained dog becomes transmuted (as if by that same alchemy to which the original had pretensions) into the melancholy hero whose thirst is not merely for pleasure but for knowledge as well . . . and may it not be, in some measure at least, that these who surveyed him from a distance—including, now, Roger Zelazny, briefly and poignantly—rather than those who were his near-contemporaries, saw the more of the truth?*

THE SALVATION OF FAUST

by Roger Zelazny

THE CURSED BELLS OF ORGY-time are ringing. My words begin to stir upon the page.

Blinking clear, I see that the paper is moist.

A strange taste to the wine, a tainted perfume in the hangings, and Helen snoring gently . . .

I rise. I cross to the window and look outside.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The animals are enjoying themselves.

They look like me. They walk and talk like me. But they are animals. *Animal post coitum triste est* is not always the case. They are happy.

Sporting about the great pole, and unashamed upon the village green, indeed they are happy animals. Repeatedly so.

The bells!

I should give anything I possess to join them there!

But they disgust me.

. . . Helen?

No. No solace today. For, verily, I am *triste.*

The wine. Their wine is tapped so early in the morning! Blessed drunkenness inundates the countryside. My wine is tainted, however.

I am damned.

"My god, my god—why hast thou forsaken me?"

"Faustus?"

"Helen?"

"Come to me."

I kiss her with the tenderness of the strange feeling I have known these past months.

"Why?"

"Why what, my dear?"

"Why must you treat me as you do?"

"I have no word for the feeling."

The tears of Helen upon the counterpane, drops of misery upon my hands.

"Why are you not like the others?"

I stare across the room. Each peal of the Orgy bell rattles upon the walls of flesh, the bars of bone.

"I traded something very precious, my dear, for all that I possess."

"What?"

"I have no word for it."

I return to the balcony and throw a handful of gold coins to the beggars who crouch by the gate, torn between their desire for alms and the lecherous cries of their sagging flesh. Let both be answered.

Let them be gone!

My eyes fall upon the dagger, the ceremonial dagger I had used in the rituals. If only I had the strength, the will . . .

But something, I do not understand what, cries out within me, "Do not! It is a—"

—I have no word for the concept.

"Wagner!"

A sudden resolution. A pathetic entreaty.

An attempt . . .

"You called, master?"

"Yes, Wagner. Set up the north room. Today I shall conjure."

His freckled face drops. A sniff emerges from his snubnose.

"Hurry. Set things up. Then you may join them on the green."

He brightens. He bows. He never bowed before, but I have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

changed, and people fear me now.

"Helen, my dearest, I go to put on my robes. Perhaps I shall be a different man when I return."

She breathes heavily, she squirms upon the bed.

"Oh, do! Please!"

Her animal passions both attract and repel me now. Oh damnation! That I had never tampered with things forbidden! For mere wealth, knowledge, power . . . This!

Down my long halls, and through the glittering vistas of crystal, of marble. Of painted canvas. The thousand statues of my palace are crying.

"Hold! Save us, Faustus! Do not go back! We will grow ugly . . ."

"I am sorry, beauty," I answer, "but you are not enough. I must fight to recover what once was mine."

I pass on, and something is sobbing behind me.

The north room wears black, and the Circle is drawn. The candles whip the shadows with lashes of light. The walls are carousel, Wagner's eyes, and pleading.

"Well set. Go thy ways, Wagner. Enjoy the day, thy youth . . ."

My voice breaks, but he is already gone.

The black robes disgust me also. It is repugnant to traffic thus—why, I do not know.

"Gather, darkness!"

The heaviness is upon me. Contact already—rapport soon.

"Great hornéd one, I summon thee, from the depths . . ."

Each candle is bonfire.

Light without illumination.

Darkness visible . . .

"By all the great names, I charge thee, appear before me . . ."

He is here, and my limbs are leaden.

Two eyes flickering, unblinking, from a pillar of absolute darkness.

"Faustus, you have called."

"Yes, great hornéd one, Lord of the Festival, I have summoned thee, upon this, thy day."

"What do you wish?"

"An end to the bargain."

"Why?"

"I wish to be like the others once more. I am sorry I made the pact. Take back everything you have given me! Make me like the poorest beggar at my gate, but return me to what I was!"

"Faustus. Faustus. Faustus. Three times do I speak thy name in pity. It is no longer as I will, or as thou willest, but as it is willed."

My head swimming, my knees buckling, I step forward and break the Circle.

"Then consume me. I no longer wish to live."

The pillar sways.

"I cannot, Faustus. Thy destiny is thy own."

"Why? What have I done that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

makes me so special, that sets me so apart?"

"You have accepted a soul in return for your lust to live, to know."

"What is a soul?"

"I do not know. But it was a part of the pact, and there are conditions upon this world which I must observe. You are eternally, irrevocably saved."

"Is there nothing I can do?"

"Nothing."

Heavier and heavier the robes.

"Then begone, great one. You were a good god, but I have been twisted inside. I must seek me another now, for strange things trouble me."

"Good-bye, gentle Faustus—most unhappy of men."

The emptied walls spin carousel. Around and around.

The great green sun grinds on. Forever, and ever.

The cursed bells of Orgytime are ringing!

And I in the center, alone.

ALL-HALLOWS

Hands that caressed move now
in the yellowing-plumes of bristle-fern,
lips that sang lullabies,
lips that ardently kissed,
redden the fence-row bittersweet,
darling dust richens the pawpaw thicket
where the mockers nested.

Some part of those we mourn returns
in leaf and wind and water:
O whose is the beloved voice I hear
sighing among the cedars?

—Leah Bodine Drake

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCIENCE

NOTHING COUNTS

by Isaac Asimov

IN MY RECENT ARTICLE FORGET IT! (F & SF, March 1964) I spoke of a variety of things; among them, of Roman numerals. I casually asked the readers to guess how my 18th-Century source (Pike's textbook on arithmetic) wrote "five hundred thousand" in Roman numerals.

As I suppose you can guess, the feedback from the Gentle Readers ignored most of what I said and concerned itself almost exclusively with the problem of the Roman numerals which seem, even after five centuries of obsolescence, to exert a peculiar fascination over the inquiring mind.

It is my theory that the reason for this is that Roman numerals appeal to the ego. When one passes a cornerstone which says: "Erected MCMXVIII" it gives one a sensation of power to say, "Ah, yes, nineteen eighteen" to one's self.

Naturally, I strive to give satisfaction. If Roman numerals interest you, then Roman numerals you shall have.

The notion of number and of counting, as well as the names of the smaller and more-often-used numbers, date back to prehistoric times and I don't believe that there is a tribe of human beings on Earth today, however primitive, that does not have some notion of number.

With the invention of writing (a step which marks the boundary line between "prehistoric" and "historic") the next step had to be taken —numbers had to be written. One can, of course, easily devise written symbols for the words that represent particular numbers; as easily as for any other word. In English we can write the number of fingers on one hand as "five" and the number of digits on all four limbs as "twenty."

Early in the game, however, the King's tax-collectors, chroniclers and scribes, saw that numbers had the peculiarity of being ordered. There

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was one set way of counting numbers and any number could be defined by counting up to it. Therefore why not make marks which need be counted up to the proper number.

Thus, if we let "one" be represented as ' and "two" as '' and "Three" as ''', we can then work out the number indicated by a given symbol without trouble. You can see, for instance, that the symbol, '''''''''''''''''''''' stands for "twenty-three." What's more such a symbol is universal. Whatever language you count in, the symbol stands for the number "twenty-three" whatever may be the sound, in your particular language, that represents it.

It gets hard to read too many marks in an unbroken row so it is only natural to break it up into smaller groups. If we are used to counting on the fingers of one hand, it seems natural to break up the marks into groups of five. "Twenty-three' then becomes ''''' ''''' ''''' ''''' '''. If we are more sophisticated and use both hands in counting, we would write it '''''''''' '''''''''' '''. If we go barefoot and use our toes, too, we might break numbers into twenties.

All three methods of breaking up number symbols into more easily handled groups have left their mark on the various number systems of mankind, but the favorite was division into ten. Twenty symbols in one group are, on the whole, too many for easy grasping, while five symbols in one group produce too many groups as numbers grow larger. Division into ten is the happy compromise.

It seems a natural thought to go on to indicate groups of ten by a separate mark. There is no reason to insist on writing out a group of ten as '''''''''' every time, when a separate mark, let us say —, can be used for the purpose. In that case "twenty-three" could be written as — — '''.

Once you've started this way, the next steps are clear. By the time you have ten groups of ten (a hundred), you can introduce another symbol, for instance +. Ten hundreds, or a thousand, can become = and so on. In that case, the number "four thousand six hundred seventy five" can be written ==== ++++++ ——————— '''''.

To make such a set of symbols more easily graspable, we can take advantage of the ability of the eye to form a pattern. (You know how you can tell the numbers displayed by a pack of cards or a pair of dice by the pattern itself.) We could therefore write "four thousand six hundred seventy five" as

== +++ ——— ″
—
== +++ ——— ‴

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And, as a matter of fact, the ancient Babylonians used just this system of writing numbers, though of course they didn't use the symbols I have used. They used cuneiform wedges and I used symbols that lay conveniently to hand on the typewriter keyboard.

The Greeks, in the earlier stages of their development, used a system similar to that of the Babylonians, but in later times an alternate method grew popular. They made use of another ordered system—that of the letters of the alphabet.

It is natural to correlate the alphabet and the number system. We are taught both about the same time in childhood and the two ordered systems of objects naturally tend to match up. The series "ay, bee, see, dee . . ." comes as glibly as "one, two, three, four . . ." and there is no difficulty in substituting one for the other.

If we use undifferentiated symbols such as ' ' ' ' ' ' ' for "seven" all the components of the symbol are identical and all must be included without exception if the symbol is to mean "seven" and nothing else. On the other hand if "ABCDEFG" stands for "seven" (count the letters and see) then, since each symbol is different, only the last need be written. You can't confuse the fact that G is the seventh letter of the alphabet and therefore stands for "seven." In his way, a one-component symbol does the work of a seven-component symbol. Furthermore ' ' ' ' ' ' (six) looks very much like ' ' ' ' ' ' ' (seven); whereas F (six) looks nothing at all like G (seven).

The Greeks used their own alphabet, of course, but lest we cause general hand-wringing at Mercury Publications, let's use our own alphabet here for the complete demonstration: A = one, B = two, C = three, D = four, E = five, F = six, G = seven, H = eight, I = nine and J = ten.

We could let the letter K go on to equal "eleven" but at that rate our alphabet will only help us up through "twenty-six". The Greeks had a better system. The Babylonian notion of groups of ten had left its mark. If J = ten then J equals not only ten objects but also one group of tens. Why not, then, continue the next letters as numbering groups of tens.

In other words J = ten, K = twenty, L = thirty, M = forty, N = fifty, O = sixty, P = seventy, Q = eighty, R = ninety. Then we can go on to number groups of hundreds: S = one hundred, T = two hundred, U = three hundred, V = four hundred, W = five hundred, X = six hundred, Y = seven hundred, Z = eight hundred. It would be convenient to go on to nine hundred but we have run out of letters.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

However, in old fashioned alphabets, the ampersand (&) was sometimes placed at the end of the alphabet so we can say that & = nine hundred.

The first nine letters, in other words, represent the units from one to nine, the second nine letters represent the tens groups from one to nine, the third nine letters represent the hundreds groups from one to nine. (The Greek alphabet, in classic times, had only twenty-four letters where twenty-seven are needed, so the Greeks made use of three archaic letters to fill out the list.)

This system possesses its advantages and disadvantages over the Babylonian system. One advantage is that any number under a thousand can be given in three symbols. For instance, by the system I have just set up with our alphabet, six hundred seventy-five is XPE, while eight hundred sixteen is ZJF.

One disadvantage of the Greek system, however, is that the significance of twenty-seven different symbols must be carefully memorized for the use of numbers to a thousand, whereas in the Babylonian system, only three different symbols must be memorized.

Furthermore, the Greek system comes to a natural end when the letters of the alphabet are used up. Nine hundred ninety-nine (&RI) is the largest number that can be written without introducing special markings to indicate that a particular symbol indicates groups of thousands, tens of thousands and so on. I will get back to this later.

A rather subtle disadvantage of the Greek system was that the same symbols were used for numbers and words so that the mind could be easily distracted. For instance, the Jews of Graeco-Roman times adopted the Greek system of representing numbers but, of course, used the Hebrew alphabet—and promptly ran into a difficulty. The number "fifteen" would naturally be written as "ten-five." In the Hebrew alphabet, however, "ten-five" represents a short version of the ineffable name of the Lord, and the Jews, uneasy at the sacrilege, allowed "fifteen" to be represented as "nine-six" instead.

Worse yet, words in the Greek-Hebrew system look like numbers. For instance, to use our own alphabet, WRA is "five hundred ninety-one." In the alphabet system, it doesn't matter in which order we place the symbols and WAR also means "five hundred ninety-one." (After all, we can say "five hundred one-and-ninety" if we wish.) Consequently, it is easy to believe that there is something warlike, martial, and of ominous import in the number "five hundred ninety-one."

The Jews, poring over every syllable of the Bible in their effort to copy the word of the Lord with the exactness that reverence required,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

saw numbers in all the words, and in New Testament times, a whole system of mysticism arose over the numerical interrelationships within the Bible. This was the nearest the Jews came to mathematics and they called this numbering of words "gematria" which is a distortion of the Greek "geometria." We now call it "numerology."

Some poor souls, even today, assign numbers to the different letters and decide which names are lucky and which unlucky, and which boy should marry which girl and so on. It is one of the more laughable pseudo-sciences.

In one case, a piece of gematria had repercussions in later history. This bit of gematria is to be found in "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," the last book of the New Testament; a book which is written in a mystical fashion that defies literal understanding. The reason for the lack of clarity is itself quite clear. The author of Revelation was denouncing the Roman government and was laying himself open to a charge of treason and subsequent crucifixion if he made his words too clear. Consequently, he made an effort to write in such a way as to be perfectly clear to his "in-group" audience, while remaining completely meaningless to the Roman authorities.

In the thirteenth chapter, he speaks of beasts of diabolical powers and in the eighteenth verse, he says, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred three-score and six."

Clearly, this is designed not to give the pseudo-science of gematria holy sanction, but merely to serve as a guide to the actual person meant by the obscure imagery of the chapter. Revelation, as nearly as is known, was written only a few decades after the first great persecution of Christians under Nero. If Nero's name ("Neron Caesar") is written in Hebrew characters, the sum of the numbers represented by the individual letters does indeed come out to be six hundred sixty-six, a number now known as "the number of the beast."

Of course, there is no certainty in this, and other interpretations are possible. In fact, if Revelation is taken as having significance for all time as well as for the particular time in which it was written, it may refer to some anti-Christ of the future. For this reason, generation after generation, people have made attempts to show that, by the appropriate jugglings of the spelling of a name in an appropriate language, and by the appropriate assignment of numbers to letters, some particular personal enemy could be made to possess the number of the beast.

If the Christians could apply it to Nero, the Jews themselves might easily have applied it to Hadrian a century later, if they had wished.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Five centuries later still it could be (and was) applied to Mohammed. At the time of the Reformation, Catholics calculated Martin Luther's name and found it to be the number of the beast, and Protestants returned the compliment by making the same discovery in the case of several Popes.

Later still, when religious rivalries were replaced by nationalistic ones, Napoleon Bonaparte and William II were appropriately worked out. What's more, a few minutes work with my own system of alphabet-numbers shows me that "Herr Adollf Hitler" has the number of the beast. (I need that extra "l" to make it work.)

The Roman system of number symbols had similarities to both the Greek and Babylonian systems. Like the Greeks, the Romans used letters of the alphabet. However, they did not use them in order, but used just a few letters which they repeated as often as necessary—as in the Babylonian system. Unlike the Babylonians, the Romans did not invent a new symbol for ever ten-fold increase of number, but (more primitively) used new symbols for five-fold increases as well.

Thus, to begin with, the symbol for "one" is I, and "two", "three" and four" can be written II, III, and IIII.

The symbol for five, then, is *not* IIIII, but is V. People have amused themselves no end trying to work out the reasons for the particular letters chosen as symbols, but there are no explanations that are universally accepted. However, it is pleasant to think that I represents the upheld finger and that V might symbolize the hand itself with all five fingers: one branch of the V would be the out-held thumb, the other, the remaining fingers. For "six", "seven", "eight" and "nine", we would then have VI, VII, VIII, and VIIII.

For "ten", we would then have X, which (some people think) represents both hands held wrist to wrist. "Twenty-three" would be XXIII, "forty-eight" would be XXXXVIII and so on.

The symbol for "fifty" is L, for "one hundred" is C, for "five hundred" is D and for "one thousand" is M. The C and M are easy to understand, for C is the first letter of "centum" (meaning "one hundred") and M is the first letter of "mille" (one thousand).

For that very reason, however, those symbols are suspicious. As initials they may have come to oust the original less-meaningful symbols for those numbers. For instance, an alternative symbol for "thousand" looks like this (I). (This is the nearest I can come, using the symbols available on my typewriter keyboard and, for the sake of the Noble Printer, I wish to confine myself to those.) Half of a thousand or "five

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hundred" is the right half of the symbol, or I) and this may have been converted into D. As for the L which stands for "fifty", I don't know why it is used. Now, then, we can write nineteen sixty-four, in Roman numerals, as follows: MDCCCCLXIIII.

One advantage of writing numbers according to this system is that it doesn't matter in which order the numbers are written. If I decided to write nineteen sixty-four as CDCLIIMXCICI, it would still represent nineteen sixty-four if I add up the number values of each letter. However, it is not likely that anyone would ever scramble the letters in this fashion. If the letters were written in strict order of decreasing value, as I did the first time, it would then be much simpler to sum the values of the letters. And, in fact, this order of decreasing value is (except for special cases) always used.

Once the order of writing the letters in Roman numerals is made an established convention, one can make use of deviations from that set order if it will help simplify matters. For instance, suppose we decide that when a symbol of smaller value *follows* one of larger value, the two are added; while if the symbol of smaller value *precedes* one of larger value, the first is subtracted from the second. Thus VI is "five" plus "one" or "six", while IV is "five" minus "one" or "four." (One might even say that IIV is "three", but it is conventional to subtract no more than one symbol.) In the same way LX is "sixty" while XL is "forty"; CX is "one hundred ten", while XC is "ninety"; MC is "one thousand one hundred" while CM is "nine hundred."

The value of this "subtractive principle" is that two symbols can do the work of five. Why write VIIII if you can write IX; or DCCCC if you can write CM. The year nineteen sixty-four, instead of being written MDCCCCLXIIII (twelve symbols), can be written MCMLXIV (seven symbols). On the other hand, once you make the order of writing letters significant, you can no longer scramble them even if you wanted to. For instance if MCMLXIV is scrambled to MMCLXVI it becomes "two thousand one hundred sixty-six."

The subtractive principle was used on and off in ancient times but was not regularly adopted till the Middle Ages. One interesting theory for the delay involves the simplest use of the principle; that of IV ("four"). These are the first letters of IVPITER, the chief of the Roman gods and the Romans may have had a delicacy about writing even the beginning of the name. Even today, on clockfaces bearing Roman numerals, "four" is represented as IIII rather than as IV. This is not because the clockface does not accept the subtractive principle for "nine" is represented as IX and never as VIIII.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With the symbols already given, we can go up to the number "four thousand nine hundred ninety-nine" in Roman numerals. This would be MMMMDCCCCLXXXXVIIII or, if the subtractive principle is used, MMMMCMXCIX. You might suppose that "five thousand" (the next number) could be written MMMMM, but this is not quite right. Strictly speaking, the Roman system never requires a symbol to be repeated more than four times. A new symbol is always invented to prevent that: IIIII = V; XXXXX = L; and CCCCC = D. Well, then, what is MMMMM?

No letter was decided upon for "five thousand." In ancient times there was little need in ordinary life for numbers that high. And if scholars and tax collectors had occasion for larger numbers, their systems did not percolate down to the common man.

One method of penetrating to "five thousand" and beyond is to use a bar to represent thousands. Thus, $\overline{V}$ would represent not "five" but "five thousand." And sixty-seven thousand four hundred eighty-two would be $\overline{\text{LXVII}}$CDLXXXII.

But another method of writing large numbers harks back to the primitive symbol (I) for "thousand." By adding to the curved lines, we can increase the number by ratios of ten. Thus "ten thousand" would be ((I)), and "hundred thousand" would be (((I))). Then just as "five hundred" was I) or D, "five thousand" would be I)) and "fifty thousand" would be I))).

Remember now, that in FORGET IT! I asked if any Gentle Reader could guess how Pike represented "five hundred thousand." A number wrote that he wrote it $\overline{D}$, but he didn't. That symbol would indeed represent "five hundred thousand" but it is not the one he used. Instead, he uses the older system of straight and curved lines. Since "fifty thousand" is I))), as Pike himself admits, one might suspect that "five hundred thousand" would be I)))), but Pike does not use that. Instead, he represents "five hundred thousand" as I)))I))). Don't ask me why.

Just as the Romans made special marks to indicate thousands, so did the Greeks. What's more, the Greeks made special marks for ten-thousands and for millions (or at least some of the Greek writers did). That the Romans didn't carry this to the logical extreme is no surprise. The Romans prided themselves on being non-intellectual. That the Greeks missed it also, however, will never cease to astonish me.

Suppose that instead of making special marks for large numbers only, one were to make special marks for every type of group from the units

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on. If we stick to the system I introduced at the start of the article; that is, the one in which ′ stands for units, — for tens, + for hundreds and = for thousands, then we could get by with but one set of nine symbols. We could write every number with a little heading, marking off the type of groups $^{=+-'}$. Then for "two thousand five hundred eighty-one" we could get by with only the letters from A to I and write it $^{-+-'}$BEHA. What's more, for "five thousand five hundred fifty-five" we could write $^{-+-'}$EEEE. There would be no confusion among the E's since the symbol above each E would indicate that one was a "five" another a "fifty" another a "five hundred" and another a "five thousand." By using additional symbols for ten-thousands, hundred-thousands, millions and so on, any number, however large, could be written in this same fashion.

Yet it is not surprising that this would not be popular. Even if a Greek had thought of it he would have been repelled by the necessity of writing those tiny symbols. In an age of hand-copying, additional symbols meant additional labor and scribes would resent that furiously.

Of course, one might easily decide that the symbols weren't necessary. The groups, one could agree, could always be written right to left in increasing values. The units would be at the right end, the tens next on the left, the hundreds next and so on. In that case, BEHA would be "two thousand five hundred eighty-one" and EEEE would be "five thousand five hundred fifty-five" even without the little symbols on top.

Here, though, a difficulty would creep in. What if there were no groups of ten, or perhaps no units, in a particular number. Consider the number "ten" or the number "a hundred and one." The former is made up of one group of ten and no units, while the latter is made up of one group of hundreds, no groups of tens and one unit. Using symbols over the columns, the numbers could be written $^{-'}$A and $^{+-'}$A A, but now you would not dare leave out the little symbols. If you did, how could you differentiate A meaning "ten" from A meaning "one" or AA meaning "a hundred and one" from AA meaning "eleven" or AA meaning "a hundred and ten."

You might try to leave a gap so as to indicate a "hundred and one" by A A. But then, in an age of hand-copying, how quickly would that become AA, or, for that matter, how quickly might AA become A A? Then, too, how would you indicate a gap at the end of a symbol. No, even if the Greeks thought of this system, they must obviously have come to the conclusion that the existence of gaps in numbers made this attempted simplification impractical. They decided it was safer to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

let J stand for "ten" and SA for "a hundred and one" and to Hades with little symbols.

What no Greek ever thought of—not even Archimedes himself—was that it wasn't absolutely necessary to work with gaps. One could fill the gap with a symbol by letting one stand for nothing; for "no groups." Suppose we use $ as such a symbol. Then, if "a hundred and one" is made up of one group of hundreds, no groups of tens, and one unit, it can be written A$A. If we do that sort of thing, all gaps are eliminated and we don't need the little symbols on top. "One" becomes A, "ten" becomes A$, "one hundred" becomes A$$, "a hundred and one" becomes A$A, "a hundred and ten" becomes AA$ and so on. Any number, however large, can be written with the use of exactly nine letters plus a symbol for nothing.

Surely this is the simplest thing in the world—after you think of it.

Yet it took men about five thousand years, counting from the beginning of number symbols, to think of a symbol for nothing. The man who succeeded (one of the most creative and original thinkers in history) is unknown. We know only that he was some Hindu who lived no later than the ninth century.

The Hindus called the symbol "sunya" meaning "empty." This symbol for nothing was picked up by the Arabs, who termed it "sifr" which in their language meant "empty." This has been distorted into our own words "cipher" and, by way of "zefirum," into "zero."

Very slowly, the new system of numerals (called "Arabic numerals" because the Europeans learned of them from the Arabs) reached the west and replaced the Roman numerals.

Because the Arabic numerals came from lands which did not use the Roman alphabet, the shape of the numerals was nothing like the letters of the Roman alphabet and this was good, too. This removed word-number confusion and reduced gematria from the every-day occupation of anyone who could read, to a burdensome folly that only a few could support.

The Arabic numerals as now used by us are, of course, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and the all-important 0. Such is our reliance on these numerals (which are internationally accepted) that we are not even aware of the extent to which we rely on them. For instance if this article has seemed vaguely queer to you, perhaps it was because I had deliberately refrained from using Arabic numerals all through.

We all know the great simplicity Arabic numerals have lent to arithmetical computation. The unnecessary load they took off the human mind, all because of the presence of the zero, is simply incalcula-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ble. Nor has this fact gone unnoticed in the English language. The importance of the zero is reflected in the fact that when we work out an arithmetical computation we are (to use a term now slightly old-fashioned) "ciphering." And when we work out some code, we are "deciphering" it.

So if you look once more at the title of this article, you will see that I am not being cynical. I mean it literally. Nothing counts! The symbol for nothing makes all the difference in the world.

F&SF—The Sun Never Sets On

The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION is now being sent to seventy-two countries and territories of the world and to all seven continents.

From Afghanistan to Zanzibar and from Iceland to New Zealand, (including some countries behind the iron curtain) there are readers enjoying F&SF in English, in French, in German, or in Spanish.

This is most gratifying both to the editor and the publisher. More important, we believe its reflects a growing worldwide interest in stories and articles with imagination and vision.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"An eminent clergyman, asked his opinion of Gulliver's Travels, *which had recently been published, replied that 'it was all a pack of lies, and he did not believe a word of it!' . . ." Among the reports which received this worthy man's scorn was that of the* Struldbruggs, *the immortals of the Island of Luggnagg. The latest relation on this matter comes to us from a writer new to SF, John Sutherland, Associate Professor of English at Colby College, who says of himself, "I have published a fair number of articles in professional journals, as well as one textbook, and I am at work on a study of eighteenth century satire . . . I live in the country (at East Vassalboro, Maine) with my wife and three young children." His story, however, deals with this current century, into which its protagonists have survived from the previous one. Let it suffice to say that it is not serious, and offers fun and games for all.*

THE STRULDBRUGG REACTION

by John Sutherland

". . . They were the most mortifying Sight I ever beheld; and the Women more horrible than the Men. Besides the usual Deformities in extreme old Age, they acquired an additional Ghastliness in Proportion to their Number of Years, which is not to be described; and among half a Dozen I soon distinguished which was the oldest, although there were not above a Century or two between them.

The Reader will easily believe, that from what I had heard and seen, my keen Appetite for Perpetuity of Life was much abated. . . . The King . . . raillied me very pleasantly; wishing I would send a Couple of Struldbruggs to my own Country, to arm our People against the Fear of Death. . . ." (from TRAVELS INTO SEVERAL REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD, *by Lemuel Gulliver)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SINCE WE HAVE GROWN SO VERY old, I must confess to a degree of self-indulgence which formerly I might have scorned. Hence there was nothing unusual about my being still asleep at nine o'clock on that fateful morning in August when my manservant, George, shook me so respectfully by the shoulder. Nonetheless, I started wide awake on the instant at the sight of his wide owl-like eyes and downturned solemn mouth. And when through my incipient cataracts I saw at his side Anthony, the faithful servant of my ancient comrade and mentor in scientific detection, Haricot Bones, I knew some fresh adventure must be in the wind. But little did I imagine that Bones' classic skills soon were to be tried in perilous competition with the ruthlessly direct methodology of a late-twentieth century American private investigator.

The rain dashed in hot, sullen streams against the steel-framed windows of my hotel bedroom. From the streets of New York—which seemed as far beneath our luxurious suite as the fleeting dreams of a past century—the roar of automotive traffic rose to astonish me once again with the vulgar, assertive power of the brash new world into which our stubborn bodies had endured.

Surely the world had changed vastly, I mused, since Bones and I had been young men together in our digs on Baker Street. We had not realized then, of course, how very young we were. Nor had we realized in that better, simpler day, as we pursued implacably the archcriminal, Dr. O'Shaunnessy, that finally we should overtake him—and that he would have his revenge. Yet so it came to pass—and a bitter, fiendish revenge it has proved to be!

"Up, Dawson up! Catch the hour before it flies!"

Painfully I turned my head upon its pillow. Sure enough, there sat Bones, alert in his wheelchair in the center of my bedroom. His hawklike visage and piercing eyes were as commanding at ninety-five (which is all he will confess to) as ever they had been in earlier, happier years. But perhaps, I reflected, he would not agree that those had been happier years. He had not at that time suffered from Dr. O'Shaunnessy's revenge to the extent I had. Moreover, his moods had mellowed with age, and to the best of my knowledge he had not felt need to revert to cocaine for at least thirty years. Of course, there had been some unfortunate experiments with hashish—and now there was mescaline. . . .

Again my reflections were interrupted: "Up, Dawson, up! The game is afoot! Anthony will help George to dress you and mount you in your wheelchair." Bones' distinguished features twisted into an arch—although extremely wrin-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kled—smile. "It is ridiculous that you should lie there mooning over your old friend's petty vices when one fiendish crime has been perpetrated, and another impends!"

"Astonishing!" I exclaimed. "Astonishing!"

"Not at all, Dawson," he replied with evident satisfaction. He oscillated his chair by turning first one wheel and then the other. "You must know by now that to me your thoughts oft are writ plain upon your face, hide them as you will behind the blotches of senile dermatitis." Then the sound of his grim chuckle, like the last stifled shrieks of a hyena choking on chickenfeathers, called most unexpectedly to my mind a queer experience I once had at Bloemfontein, before the relief of Mafeking.

But George and Anthony huddled me into my dressing gown, and the significance of this recollection momentarily eluded me. When George pushed me past Bones enroute to the lavatory, I could not forbear murmuring: "I only meant, my dear Haricot, that it is astonishing in this brave new world to find that so much still depends upon the efforts of such very old gentlemen as ourselves."

"Just so, Dawson, just so," Bones grumbled. I saw him color, and knew that I had scored a touch. But I also knew that his deductions had been correct (as so often before), and I flinched to think of the petty malice of my deception.

Bones wheeled to watch in the mirror as George trimmed the grizzled remnants of my beard. "You are thinking of chickenfeathers," he announced in a high, strained voice.

"Quite right, Haricot," I replied. "But you cannot astonish me with simple tricks of lipreading after all these years. I know my lips move as I keen over my tattered store of memories. However, in this particular case, you can oblige me mightily—if you will be good enough to elucidate further this strange, obsessive image."

"I'm sorry, my dear Dawson, but I cannot," he admitted. "Perhaps if you were to tell me . . . ?"

"I shan't trouble you with the trivial circumstance which brought the uncouth word to my mind and lips just now," I broke in hastily. "However, the image of chickenfeathers is linked indelibly in my recollection with an extraordinary experience I once had when serving as a Surgeon with the Home County Rifles at Bloemfontein. . . ." And I went on to tell how, for night after night, I had been unable to sleep because of the groans and sighs of the wounded men and the unearthly, shrieking laughter of prowling hyenas. I had had a touch of fever, and my old wound from the Afghan campaign began again to trouble me. (Soon I was to be invalided home.) One grisly brute of a great dog hyena haunted my fancy like a demon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sometimes it stole limbs from the pits behind the amputation tents —sometimes it robbed the officers' henroost. We were all near off our heads with the horror of it when, one hot black night, the brute's usual shrieks of laughter suddenly slid down scale to end in the most ghastly wheezing chuckles. Finally even these ceased. We went out next morning to find the huge mangy brute choked to death, a human arm protruding from its slavering mouth as if there were a man inside signalling for help. But when we opened it up, we found its throat and windpipe choked only with chickenfeathers.

Gravely, Bones heard me out. "Truly an horrendous vision," he said. "But you should have told me sooner, my dear Dawson, that you found my own innocent chuckling so unpleasant."

"It's not that, my dear Haricot . . ."

"We've campaigned together too long for you to hookwink me, old friend."

"But truly, my dear Haricot," I replied, "no matter what first brought the image to my mind, I have the most unearthly feeling that it has some tremendous occult significance for us now. Perhaps it is intended as a warning against greed."

"Why my scientific Dr. Dawson," Bones said lightly, "I never thought you would yield so grossly to superstition in your old age."

Our servants stowed us in one cab, themselves and our wheelchairs in another. As we swung in convoy through the gaudy canyons of the entertainment district, Bones began to tell me something of our errand.

"I was approached," he said, "by an extremely fat, ancient female person, wearing scarlet trousers, a yellow shirt, and a shining blue-grey wig."

"An entertainer from the music halls?" I hazarded.

"If you had been more observant during the past few weeks, my dear Dawson, you would recognize that I describe a quite conventional American costume."

"Extraordinary!"

"Indeed. Whatever one may think of her taste in dress, this person was old enough to recall some of the much-publicized successes of my middle career. She had seen a notice in the papers that we were visiting in this city. I must confess I was flattered that she should seek me out in her distress."

"Very gratifying, I'm sure," I murmured coldly, stung by his slur on my powers of observation.

"She has a granddaughter," Bones went on, "whom she believes to be in deadly danger. At present we are enroute to call upon that young woman at her place of employment—which, coincidentally, is also the scene of the recent crime. Her employer is a private inquiry agent—of a rather dis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reputable genre, I was given to understand by the grandparent."

"Why in the world did you agree to take the case?" I asked, thinking of the many distinguished clients we had turned away since Bones' semi-retirement more than a half-century before. But Bones only smiled his inscrutable smile and—after reaching quickly into his waistcoat pocket—began softly to hum a tune from *Pinafore*. These characteristic actions told me that he had disconnected his hearing aid, and I could hope for no more information at that time.

The private inquiry agent's name turned out to be Mickey O'Reilly. His office was on the second floor of a dingy brick building on a sidestreet crowded with taverns and tenements. To the vast amusement of a horde of street urchins, our men had to carry us up the narrow front steps. Fortunately, Bones had provided himself with a pocketful of small native coins, and a few handfuls tossed judiciously into the scrum (by Anthony, at Bones' direction) purchased us respite from their jeers and importunities. (They seemed particularly amused by Bones' old deerstalker, which I must confess seemed unsuitable headgear—both for the city, and for the wet, tropical climate.)

Mammiferous and steatopygous in the extreme, the young woman we sought at once informed us that she had been chosen Miss Yonkers Ballbearing in 1961, and had been runnerup in a beauty contest in Ocean City, New Jersey, in the same year. Bones made some more formal introductions, and I discovered that her name was Rose-Albertine Chandler. Her hair was an extremely bright red, and it seemed to have been trained, like ivy, to grow backward and upward from every side to shape a shining fountain of fire on top of her head.

As she flounced about helping George and Anthony to arrange our chairs, her body vibrated in a manner which might have charmed my susceptible heart a short decade before, when I still was commuting to Zurich for monkey-gland treatments. Her musky perfume, mingled with the scent of powder and perspiration, hung heavy in the air of the grubby little office. When she reseated herself, the flimsy material of her blouse clung in the heat to her damp, half-exposed mammaries. Through some ingenious artifice of her staymaker, the two plump organs protruded at an upward angle from her torso, to confront us like mortars, or howitzers, across the no-man's-land of her typewriting machine. Our servants, I perceived, were deeply moved by her charms.

A short, stout, crophaired person, his face inflamed by dissipation, entered from a back room which appeared to serve both as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

private office and as bedchamber. The person's rumpled olive-purple suit was of artificial silk, and he wore an olive-purple shirt to match; a smouldering cigar stump protruded from his thick lips, and a half-empty pint of cheap native whiskey depended from his left hand. With a certain negligent grace, Rose-Albertine introduced him to us as her employer, Mickey O'Reilly.

"Call me Mick," he said, and offered Bones a pull at his flask.

As O'Reilly paced the grimy, splintered floor amidst mingled fumes of tobacco and whiskey, sweat and scent, he poured out a passionate tale of blood and slaughter fit to chill the blood of even slightly less experienced investigators than Bones and myself. Hardened campaigner that I am, I must confess I yearned for a nice biscuit and a steadying glass of sherry long before the brutal inquiry agent had finished his strange recital.

"I'm a private eye, see?" said O'Reilly. "And there's lots of mugs would like me rubbed, see? But I had this pal—would give his right arm for me, see? He cooled a couple of hoods, and the rest lay low. . . ."

"Yes, yes," said Bones, but his eyes were elsewhere—darting about the floor looking for clues—racing like liberated mongooses back at the snakepits after long dull years of idle luxury. I could see nothing but the dust of ages, but I knew that each splinter scratched from the ancient floor, each blob and dribble of dirt or excrement, had its special message for Haricot's trained senses.

"And there he lay, see?" O'Reilly continued twenty minutes later. Each time O'Reilly said "see," he slapped viciously at the sinister bulge of a shoulder holster under his sleazy purple jacket. "Blood was running out under the door like flood tide in the Hudson River. Old Rose-Alley here took one look and flopped like a gut-shot bitch." His voice trembled, then hardened, and he spoke as if from a larynx of reinforced concrete: "My old Buddy, Cash O'Toole, cashed in at last, see? Shot and cut like he'd gone through the A&P meat-grinder, and I'll get the dirty bastuds 'at did it, if it takes till judgment day, see?"

"Quite right, Mr. O'Reilly, I'm sure," said Haricot smoothly. "You have every reason to be disturbed, but of course you realize that you must not take the law into your own hands."

"Damn the law!" cried O'Reilly. "It's blood I want!" He drew his automatic pistol—I observed that it was a .45 calibre Colt—and emptied its clip. Then he snapped open as ugly a spring stiletto as I have had the displeasure of seeing since the Black Hand chased us through Syracuse in '93. With this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he proceeded to incise deep crosses in the soft, blunt noses of two bullets. Then he reloaded, putting the doctored bullets on top where they would be first to enter the chamber.

"Dum-dums," said Haricot calmly. "It was the only way we could stop the Fuzzy-Wuzzys—whatever sentimentalists may claim."

"I want revenge, see?" growled O'Reilly. "I'll blow holes in the bastuds they can stick their own heads through. I'll cut their hearts out and make them eat them!" He hurled his empty flask into a corner where it broke with a sodden crash, then staggered out the door, pistol in one hand, knife in the other.

"Ooh, eech!" said Rose-Albertine suddenly, and flopped forward over her writing machine.

"Fetch the ammonia salts, Anthony," Haricot said. "The wretched female has fainted at a most inconvenient juncture." In response to his command, both our servants lunged eagerly to the relief of the unconscious beauty.

"But where has that brute, O'Reilly, gone?" I asked. "Is it safe to allow him to wander forth armed in his present state of mind?"

"I believe, my dear Dawson, that he has gone to interrogate one Lefty Spaghanini, the leader of the East Side mob. As for your second question—nothing in this ephemeral world is safe. We can but watch and wait."

"But how can you be sure where he is going?"

"A cut on his shoe, and those blobs of clay you see just inside the threshold, told me much. A chance remark I once overheard in a back street in Peoria correlates with their implications, as does some information I received in confidence from our sleeping beauty's grandparent." He waved negligently at the flurry around Rose-Albertine.

"Bones, you astonish me!"

"Elementary, my dear Dawson," he said, then reached gracefully into his waistcoat pocket to switch off his hearing aid. I could but stare in admiration at the high-domed forehead behind which such wonders of ratiocination were so constantly and consistently performed.

Late that afternoon, after Anthony had removed the remnants of our five o'clock tea, I determined to quiz Bones further. He had been busy with mysterious errands for most of the day, while I must confess I had been content to recuperate in the air conditioned survival chamber of our hotel suite after the harrowing expedition of the morning.

"May I ask again, my dear Haricot," I ventured, "why you have decided to involve yourself in such a sordid affair?" (I feared, although

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I dared not say so, that his affections had been entrapped by the flamboyant grandparent. I knew he was still taking Swiss gland treatments.)

Bones turned his wheelchair to stare out the window. As he began to speak, I watched with admiring fascination the silhouette of his hawklike visage. "You will recall, my dear Dawson," he said, "a certain fateful morning in a Sussex pub, when our tea had a peculiarly acrid flavor?"

"Of course. But that was many years ago—although we still suffer the consequences."

"*Suffer,*" he said, "is your word for it. I await further experience. However, the fiend responsible for the adulteration—I refer, of course, to Dr. O'Shaunnessy—intended without doubt to poison us. In the event, as all the world knows, the new poison he had synthesized combined with an antidote of my own invention to set off what the press has been pleased to call the Struldbrugg Reaction. Now, although our bodies continue to decay at a most distressing rate, our vital spirits continue unimpaired. If we can escape violence, we may live on for many hundreds of years!"

"An appalling prospect," I said bitterly.

"As I said before," he replied, "that is a matter of opinion. We must await the event. But what would you say if I informed you that Mr. Michael O'Reilly, the private agent we visited this morning, and Mr. Cassius O'Toole, whose mutilated corpse I viewed in the morgue this afternoon, both were descendants of the late unlamented Dr. O'Shaunnessy?"

"Surely you jest, Bones," I protested.

"Not at all, my dear Dawson," he replied. "You will recall that O'Shaunnessy steadfastly refused to divulge the secret of that remarkable poison—refused, in fact, to admit his complicity in its formulation. One reason for my neglect of more public problems in scientific detection has been my unremitting pursuit of every wisp and fragment of evidence which might lead me to that lost formula. Just think, Dawson," he said, swinging his chair to confront me, his hawk's eyes burning with enthusiasm, "think what this may mean for humanity! The secret of eternal life! The fountain of youth!"

"But think of all we have suffered, Haricot," I protested. "One can hardly call this state we endure *youth*!"

"Bagatelle. If we can but keep life in body, all other things will be added unto us. You would be amazed if I told you about some of the feats I have accomplished after my monthly injection in Zurich!" He swung back to the window. "But all this is beside the point. I allowed you to believe this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to be a mere pleasure tour, but I led us over here following a lead I received from one of my agents—a little man who keeps a shop in the Tottenham Court Road. From an aged aunt in Eastcheap he got wind of some papers left by Dr. O'Shaunnessy. These papers had been dispatched in secret to American relatives—undoubtedly in an attempt to evade my net. With little to guide me but the names O'Reilly and O'Toole, and some addresses fifty years out of date, I came posthaste to comb the great cities of the New World. Now my search is over—but with O'Toole dead, Mickey O'Reilly is our sole remaining link with the secret of the Struldbrugg Reaction."

"Then your interest in this case is personal, after all. Perhaps Miss Chandler's grandparent was another of the fictions you have invented to amuse me?"

"Not at all, my dear Dawson," Bones assured me solemnly. "Coincidence has always been a favorite guest at my table."

At that moment George entered to announce with suspicious enthusiasm: "Miss Rose-Albertine Chandler." I considered that the servants had competed most improperly that morning in their lust to play Prince Charming to her Sleeping Beauty. However, one must admit that they aroused her with efficiency.

Rose-Albertine flounced in right behind him, her abundant charms steaming from the heat of the outside world. "Did you hear the guy on TV?" she asked breathlessly. "He says Mickey's cooled three guys already, and that he's out for more!"

"What are the police doing?" asked Bones calmly.

"Well, Jeez, they don't know for sure who done it. The guy on TV called it 'Gangland Massacre in East Side A. C.' But, Jeez, your guys told me how you said that old Mick was gunning for Spaghanini—and he was one of them. 'Gruesomely mutilated' the guy said, just like Mick said he'd fix all those bastuds! Jeez—I hope they have some pictures in the *News* tomorrow!"

"Most extraordinary and irregular," said Bones thoughtfully. "While I am not yet prepared to name the killer of Mr. Cassius O'Toole, I am quite sure that Mr. Spaghanini had little or nothing to do with it."

"Yeah," said Rose-Albertine, with a toss of her fountain of blood-red hair, "that's the way it is with old Mick when he gets mad. It sure don't pay to fool around with him!"

Furtively I propelled my rubber-tired chair to the window and switched the fan in the airconditioning unit to high; Rose-Albertine's aura of sweat, powder, chewing gum, and cheap perfume was almost too much for my abraded nasal mucosae. "My dear Bones,"

LICENSED TO ONLINE
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I said, "this is appalling! Is it not your duty to release any information you may have right away, before any more crimes are committed?"

Bones' sharp look cut through me like an edged weapon. "You will recall the matter of which we were just speaking, which, I believe, should take priority. Moreover, these people are foreigners who have their own folkways. We have no right to interfere. I do not know that the police consider any crime to have been committed this afternoon. The dead men were known criminals, and Mr. O'Reilly, after all, is a licensed investigator. Who are we to question his methods?"

"But he seeks only private revenge," I protested, "and he is mad!"

"The Americans attach a peculiar virtue to private enterprise," Bones replied coldly, "and many men are mad."

That evening and all next day Bones kept to himself. He remained in his bedroom but left the door ajar. I could catch glimpses of him in his chrome-plated wheelchair. Sometimes he darted about the luxurious chamber like a trout in a forest pool; sometimes he stopped, contemplative in midcarpet, for hours at a time. Sometimes he seemed to be immersed in minute calculations in the small black notebook which he always carried with him. Sometimes he filled the suite with the piercing strains of his violin, as he composed wild chords to express his fancy or his vision.

One concession alone would Bones make to our fears—although he may have made it more for the sake of the garish petitioner who first brought him into the case. Rose-Albertine remained with us. She spent most of her time with our men, who readily agreed to find her a place to stay with them in the servant's quarters. Both George and Anthony boasted stoutly that they would mount strict guard over her both day and night. No matter how O'Toole had met his end—they said—O'Reilly's enemies would find in Rose-Alley Chandler no easy victim for their spite. I could only hope that they were correct.

Furtive mouse-like men crept in and out; I recognized them as creatures of the same sort employed by Bones in London to search out information. Rose-Albertine and our two menservants attended to our needs—although with what seemed increasing difficulty. Indeed, our men appeared to be getting extremely tired—perhaps, I thought, from the nervous strain of guard duty. I feared, also, that they might be drinking. However, they emerged at intervals from their quarters to inform us whenever an announcement of another of O'Reilly's killings came over the picture-wireless. "Mad Mystery

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Killer Still at Large," and "Terror Reigns in Underworld," are two fragments which stuck in George's memory long enough for him to repeat them to us.

By the middle of the second afternoon, when Bones finally emerged from his bedchamber, the toll of O'Reilly's victims stood at eight. Like a comet Haricot wheeled his gleaming chair across the sitting room to ring for the servants, and when they appeared (Rose-Albertine breathless and dishevelled between them) he gave orders to prepare for a quick trip back to O'Reilly's rooms. "If my calculations are accurate," he said, "this will be the crisis. Dr. Dawson, if you will be so good as to bring your old army revolver? We may have desperate men to deal with!"

I nodded my agreement, and our men leapt to action.

When our taxis pulled up in front of the sordid edifice which contained O'Reilly's rooms, something indefinably different about the street caught my attention. A parking space appeared at the curb just where needed. When George and Anthony came bustling around with our chairs to help us disembark, no mob of clamoring urchins gathered to make insulting remarks or to demand baksheesh. Finally, when a half-grown lad sidled up to Bones and began to speak in rapid, low tones, as if making a report, I understood. Twice before, in London, had I seen counterparts of this situation: the gang of street arabs who controlled this block, I realized, must be in Bones' pay. Now we were all actors in a deadly puppet drama, for which Bones held many strings. Uneasily, I wondered if he held enough.

"We shall wait by the front steps," Bones informed us, after we had been safely disengaged from the taxi and remounted into our chairs. "I have been informed by my young leftenant that O'Reilly left Zlotnik's Rathskeller just twenty-one minutes ago, and is now imbibing what is known as a 'boilermaker' in Harry's Tavern—an establishment which is only a half-block from us. I have sent him notice to join us here immediately. He has been told that I wish to present him with important evidence concerning the identity of the murderer of his friend O'Toole."

"Jeez," said Rose-Albertine, "you'd better not just be fooling around, old man. I think maybe I'd better get out of here. Mick's liable to start shooting if you cross him up—even just a little bit!"

"Fear not," said Haricot. "Dr. Dawson is armed and ready for any eventuality. We are old campaigners, he and I. Once we were called the tongs of justice, and many a tough nut have we cracked between us! But I shall not 'cross

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up' your friend, O'Reilly; I shall perform as promised."

"OK," replied Rose-Albertine. "I'll stay. But I know I shouldn't!" She huddled between George and Anthony, both of whom were drooping like fagged runners after a five mile race.

A shrill whistle sounded from down the block. "He's on his way," said Haricot calmly. "And by the way, I should mention that I've also invited a number of persons who, I am told, are leaders in the local underworld. They have evinced considerable interest in O'Reilly's violent activities of the past few days. And they should be arriving fairly soon." He pulled out his watch, listened to be sure it was still ticking, then considered it soberly, as if wondering whether or not it was going to explode.

Rose-Albertine was seated on O'Reilly's steps between our two haggard menservants. I was arranged in my chair on one side the steps, Bones on the other. As representatives of an older, more stable society, we were rather like the symbolically protective lions on either side the steps of the New York Public Library—if I may venture a provincial comparison. However, as we sat thinking of the blood and slaughter which had disgraced the past few days, Anthony and George quite evidently were trying to entice their fair charge to enter the building with them. After some whispered discussion, she agreed. "You guys!" she exclaimed, simpering. "Don't you ever get enough?"

Then a lithe, darkskinned boy darted by like a swallow, pausing in flight only long enough to whisper, "He's here!" Close behind, like a pursuing storm, came O'Reilly himself, his olive-purple suit even more baggy and sweatstained than before, his eyes more bloodshot, and his chin bristling like the back of a hedgehog. No weapons sullied his hands, but his clothes bulged ominously; I felt sure he was armed to the teeth. As he sprang like a rogue panther to confront us, I could feel that he was still raving mad with his blood-lust for revenge.

"Well, you old bastud," he said to Bones, "here I am. What've yuh got to tell me? Spit it out—and it had better be good!"

"The problem," replied Bones, "is really extremely elementary, once one puts aside some of the purely fortuitous circumstantial evidence. I had the pleasure of explicating a similar case in Paris, in 1898, when I was called in for consultation by the Surete. About the same time, a German colleague, Herr Professor-Doktor Fluegelbein, very kindly called to my attention a closely related variant which occurred in Hamburg in 1863. Now the minimum necessary . . ."

"Can it!" growled O'Reilly, drawing his pistol with a brutal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gesture and waving it under Haricot's nose. "Can it, or I'll blow your ass out of that tin buggy. Now, who done it? Just name a name, and I'll gut-shoot the bastud!"

"My dear O'Reilly," Haricot protested, "you have no idea—I assure you it is not as simple as that."

"Talk!" O'Reilly punched Bones roughly in the chest with the muzzle of his gun.

"There is a toilet-room in the basement of this building," Bones began. (I must confess I had no notion of what he was leading up to.)

"You won't be in no shape to use it, if you don't hurry," said O'Reilly.

"Now this toilet-room is small, dirty, ill-lighted, and extremely smelly," Bones went on calmly. "It contains only the minimum essential plumbing fixture . . ."

"You want I should ram your head in it? Get to the point!"

"Very well," replied Bones, "but whatever happens, don't blame me. Remember that each one of us, ultimately, is responsible for his own fate—that our own past actions determine both our present state and our future fortunes. You are —" he said, looking at O'Reilly's brutal features with evident distaste— "what you have made yourself. Now, if you wish, I suggest that you proceed immediately to this toilet-room, where you may find awaiting you the person you seek."

"Is he laying for me there?" demanded O'Reilly, swinging his gun in a wild arc. "Well, they've laid there before! Sometimes at night they're laying for me all over when I get back from the tavern. But I always shoot the bastuds before they can get me! I gut-shoot them, and watch them crawl and puke and lick blood before they die!" Gun in hand, he bounded up the dirty steps and disappeared into the building. I noted that Rose-Albertine and her two Prince Charmings also had vanished within. I hoped they stayed well out of O'Reilly's way.

"A charming example of primitive paranoia," Bones remarked.

"But as your, yourself, have pointed out," I protested, "his behavior seems to be perfectly acceptable to the natives of this country. Furthermore, what he reports may actually have occurred. Can we classify him as mad, if he suffers from no delusions?"

"Perhaps not. But hark—the problem may solve itself!" A burst of heavy firing resounded from within the building, like thunder, or like distant cannon on a still day.

"I trust he has not attacked the young female in his fury!"

"Rose-Alley? Where is she?" Bones' piercing glances flashed in every direction like sparks from a revolving pinwheel. "Here you," he called to one of the street arabs, "lend a hand! Dr. Dawson and I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

must be transported in our wheelchairs to the basement of this building. Here now! Quick now!"

Such was the persuasive force of his personality (aided by his purse) that we soon found ourselves propelled through dingy catacombs, enroute to the focal toilet. Behind us like a chorus of the lesser demons crept a cautious semicircle of young ragamuffins. The room was half-filled with dusty cartons and barrels—behind any one of which, I thought, might lurk an enraged gunman. Grimly I clutched my trusty old Webley in my palsied hand. Just ahead a scouting boy turned and tensely waved, then pointed to a series of dark splotches which ran across the concrete floor like oil drippings from a leaky crankcase. "Fresh blood!" he said, simply. The trail emerged from beneath the silent, closed door of the toilet-room.

At my direction, the boy kicked open the door, then leaped to safety. But when I peered within, my gun almost dropped from my trembling hand as I thought for one mad moment, *I have been here before!* The door seemed to open into the crepuscular, pre-dawn glow of the South African plain, and there before me once again lay the corpse of a great dog hyena—. It was choked with chickenfeathers, covered with chickenfeathers—and protruding from its mouth was the grisly remnant of a human arm! My swimming head wavered, and a gagging sound escaped my clenched lips.

"Steady, Dawson, steady!" came the cool voice of Bones from his station at my side. "You and I have seen too much in our day for you to flinch now at the wreckage of such a crude decoy."

Then I saw what tricks my eyes had played upon me. By the dim light I could just make out a scarecrow-like figure—made of a broom, an old jacket, and a couple of bedpillows—which lay broken across the toilet seat. One sleeve of the jacket protruded pathetically upward, insecurely caught on a splinter of broken broomstick. The pillows had burst, and drifting feathers seemed almost to fill the dirty little room.

"What . . . ?" I began, but was cut off by a woman's piercing scream.

A cry for help followed the scream, and then the shrill words: "No, Mick! No, no, Mick! Don't shoot! Don't shoot!"

"Here, Rose-Alley!" Harcot's assured tones filled the circumambient ether with new hope, as a gush of pure oxygen may bring life to a drowning man.

Her spike heels clattering like castanets on the concrete floor, her hair dishevelled, her body half unclothed, Rose-Albertine ran toward us from a dark, far corner of the cellar. In close pursuit staggered Mickey O'Reilly, blood dripping from his wounded body, his pistol

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

protruding menancingly from his beefy fist. I tried to bring my old Webley to bear, but my shaking fingers refused their duty.

Twenty ragged boys in a half-circle, with Bones and I in their midst like aged choir-masters, served as audience for the final dramatic scene. Like a queen at bay, Rose-Albertine turned proudly to face her apelike pursuer. She was clad only in a wisp of skirt, and her proud, naked breasts were levelled at O'Reilly's head like the twin muzzles of an elephant rifle. Staggering, O'Reilly pointed his heavy pistol upward from the hip, then pulled the trigger. Only a sharp metallic click greeted our straining ears, as the firing pin struck either a faulty cartridge or an empty chamber. O'Reilly sank to his knees as the blood pouring down his legs formed a pool around him. "You, too, Rose-Alley," he moaned. "I never thought you'd two-time me, you bitch!" his gun clocked again and again as he triggered it convulsively. "I'm all shot out. You've got it made, you bitch! I can't . . . I can't . . ." With these last words, he pitched forward on his face—dead. With a sob, Rose-Albertine sprang forward to throw herself on his bloody corpse.

A half hour later, a strangely mixed assemblage foregathered in the late O'Reilly's front office. There were, of course, myself and Bones, Rose-Albertine, and our two menservants (who had emerged sheepishly from behind some barrels with the rest of Rose-Albertine's clothing, after they were assured that all was safe). In addition, five swarthy gentlemen appeared, three of whom were privately introduced to me as the chiefs of some local bands of criminals; the other two, who were very similar in appearance, were publicly introduced as detective-inspectors from the police. Lurking like shadows in the corners of the room were a half-dozen of the street arabs who had proved so brave and so helpful.

Bones wheeled his chair to the center of the room, and before his commanding gaze, all fell silent. "My first clues," he said, "were a few scattered bloodspots and three lumps of clay—all of which had been overlooked by the police. With these to start with, two days of painstaking investigation were necessary to untangle the wily killer's subtle spoor. With expert assistance (he nodded gracefully to the street arabs in the corners), it was not difficult to trace O'Toole's thin trail of blood to the basement toilet, where the discovery of a spent bullet helped to confirm my developing hypothesis. The lads also helped me to trace the provenance of the tiny lumps of clay which I found just this side the office threshold. We matched them, finally, with some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mounds of subsoil around a sidewalk excavation right beside Zlotnik's Rathskeller. With this much established, I was ready to restage the circumstances of the crime—and as luck would have it, at the same time to help rude justice thrust her way to the light."

"What . . . ?" I tried to ask, but no one heeded my interruption.

"Gentlemen," Bones went on, his hawk's eyes sweeping the intent assemblage, "as you may by now have surmised, O'Reilly himself shot and killed his best friend, Cassius O'Toole. Returning from his regular nightly tour of the local taverns, O'Reilly, as was his custom, staggered to the basement toilet to relieve himself before attempting the stairs to these rooms. In the dim light, he mistook O'Toole (who was there on a similar errand) for an enemy in ambush, and shot him down. O'Reilly then retired. Due to O'Reilly's sadistic habit of shooting low, O'Toole survived long enough to crawl upstairs and drag himself into O'Reilly's rooms in search of aid. Awakened from drunken sleep by his friend's cries, O'Reilly rushed into their outer office just in time to watch his friend expire, and—in all innocence—pledge to take a dreadful revenge upon his killer."

"Extraordinary," I murmured.

"Elementary, my dear Dawson," Bones began modestly. "Even the police . . ."

"That's not what I mean," I interjected. "I fear there may be a flaw in your otherwise perfect solution. O'Reilly, you must recall, spoke of Rose-Albertine as having been a witness to the bloody scene here in the outer office. . . ."

"No more of that, Dawson," Haricot interrupted in his turn. "While candor compels me to admit that Rose-Alley may indeed have been present, we must recall that we still are gentlemen. We must have a care for the young lady's reputation!"

Hot blood flushed my face as I felt the justice of his rebuke.

After a painful moment of silence, Bones continued: "As I was saying, my dear Dawson, the problem in its essentials was so elementary that even the police might have been able to solve it in time—particularly if they had troubled to read my little monograph on the classification of the subsoils of Manhattan. Of course, the police never seem to be able to make their observations with the minute particularity which is necessary for real success. They are so taken up with their rote-learning of fingerprints; so accustomed to using the crib-notes furnished by underworld informers—that they cannot pass the more subtle tests of true detection."

"Perhaps so," I replied. "But what happened to O'Reilly himself? Did one of these gangster persons here shoot him?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"No, no!" exclaimed Bones hurriedly. "On the contrary! Ironically enough, O'Reilly achieved his own last, best wish, and took vengeance upon the killer of O'Toole —by shooting himself."

"But how?!"

"My able leftenant," Bones said, nodding toward one of the street arabs, "arranged at my direction the decoy dummy in a corner behind the toilet. When O'Reilly further confirmed my initial hypothesis by firing upon this dummy, his bullets ricocheted from the stone cellar walls to return most justly upon his own body. He was—as, ironically, in a different sense he wished to be—his own judge, jury, and executioner."

As I recalled Haricot's devotion to billiards, I at last understood his cryptic remark about helping "rude justice." "Marvelous!" I murmured, in sincere tribute to his genius.

Hours later, after satisfying some of the curiosity of Haricot's many new admirers, Bones and I relaxed in the drawing room of our hotel suite. Rose-Albertine had gone off to recuperate in her gaudy grandparent's apartment in Yonkers. Our exhausted servants had retired to their quarters to sleep.

"It is curious," I said, "that of all the horrors of the day, by far the worst for me was the sight of that broken, feathercovered dummy sprawled across that sordid toilet seat."

"Just so," said Haricot, to whom I previously had described my sensations in more detail. "Illusion is all. We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and to requite us, our dreams—for better or worse—make us. Our lives are but spiderwebs of consciousness dangling in the black abyss of illusion—stretch them as we will with new formulas for immortality. But *apropos*—what say you now to O'Shaunnessy's revenge?"

"Spiderweb or no," I replied, "life again is amusing, and I now am grateful to our unloving enemy. You may be pleased to hear that I have decided to resume my course of treatments in Zurich. But what of the formula you were seeking? Is the Struldbrugg Reaction lost forever to mankind, now that O'Shaunnessy's last two heirs are dead?"

"Aha," said Bones, "we may discover more about that later. However, you should be told that Anthony was serving interests beyond those of nature while engaged in the agreeable pursuit of young Rose-Alley. He was commissioned by me to obtain the key to O'Reilly's desk and inner room. Hidden in the desk, he found for me this paper."

Carefully, from a long manila envelope, Bones drew out a sheet of thin yellowed paper. Across it, like a record of the migration of a flock of peripatetic partridges, scrabbled the figures and symbols

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of scores of complex chemical formulae. They were traced with brown ink in a tiny, precise hand; after more than fifty years I still could recognize the highly individual style of Dr. O'Shaunnessy.

"We cannot know for some time," Bones went on portentously, "what my tests of these equations will reveal. My hopes, however, are high." Nimbly he rolled to the sideboard and poured us each a glass of light sherry. "Come, let us drink to the future! To the Struldbrugg Reaction! To the bulldog breed! Never say die!"

Glass held high, I capped his gallant toast: "Let us make Struldbruggs of all mankind! Never say die!"

EIGHT DIFFERENT MYSTERY BOOKS— ONLY $1.00!

Whether you go for the murder and mayhem school or the more subtle doings of the Baker Street types, you're sure to find plenty of good reading in this mixed bag of Jonathan Press, Bestseller and Mercury Mysteries. Over 1,000 pages of up-all-night reading will be on its way to you as soon as we receive the coupon below and one dollar.

Mercury Press, Inc., 347 East 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022 F-7

Send me 8 different mysteries. I enclose $1.00.

Name .....

Address .....

City .....State .....Zip. No. .....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Although Ron Webb is being currently and callously removed from his self-built house in the Everglades (to make way for an airport) he is neither a Seminole nor bitter. He is, instead, 27, married, father of three little girls; and has been a disc jockey, a clerk, and a newspaperman; and is now—after 21 years of effort—a professional writer. You may have seen several of his stories in Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine. *Here he is now, with a story about Danny, Jeannie, Harold, and a bottle of the kind of stuff we have, alas, been unable to buy at the friendly French Wine and Liquor Store around the corner. We still buy, though. Feel it is our duty.*

THE GIRL WITH THE 100 PROOF EYES

by Ron Webb

I FIRST MET JEANNIE over a bottle of vintage Scotch in my apartment. I found her before that in a bar. But perhaps I'd better explain. You see it all began in the Five O'Clock Club about 1 ayem —an hour into my birthday.

I was sitting alone in the joint, having had a tiff with my chick, and was sopping up a few with Al, the barkeep. I mentioned how it was my birthday and how tame it was with no broad to celebrate with and all when Al said: "Damn shame, Danny boy," and went into the back room.

He came back a minute later with this dusty old bottle of Scotch which he had copped from his bosses supply.

"For you," he said, "my compliments. The old man won't miss it. He orders the stuff by the crate from some foreign outfit, but he just opens one, maybe two, a year."

I blew the dust off to read the label, but it was in a language I'd never seen before.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Scotch. Or so the old man says. He never opened one here. Take it home and forget you're living. I'm gonna lock up."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So I went to my apartment.

After dropping some cool, blues-type wax into the machine, I cut the seal on the bottle and broke out a few cubes. Although the bottle sloshed, the booze was not forth-coming. I was in the middle of kicking myself for a fall guy when what do I see but tiny fingers sticking out over the rim. Then with a whoosh of smoke, this little dame crawled out—a little bitty naked dame.

"I'm Jeannie," the bite-sized chick said.

"I'm nuts," I answered. Whereupon she began to grow, Alice-in-Wonderland-wise, into this luscious Las Vegas type. Tall and rangy legged and a stacked upper deck. Her eyes were a bourbon amber that matched her hair.

I figured it was all done with mirrors or something. I mean who would expect a gorgeous doll like that to come out of a bottle. She stood there on my coffee table for a minute with this sleepy sort of look in her eyes.

She looked real enough. She smelled real too—sort of musky and sexy with an overlay of vintage wine. She might be a parlor trick, but who the hell cared.

"Let me help you down," I said reaching out for her.

The sleepy look vanished and her eyes got wide. Then she gave a little breathy shriek and jumped down from the table, knocking over her bottle in the process, and ran into the bathroom. I ran in too before she had a chance to lock the door. She grabbed a towel and wrapped it around her. "Don't touch me," she said with her eyes all wide and ran out the door. The towel flapped open behind exposing her luscious bottom which had a dimple. The dimple twitched tormentingly away as she fled into the living room and sat down on the couch with the towel up around her.

"I'll scream," she threatened.

I decided that discretion was the better part of valor, and sat down across the room. After all, we weren't even acquainted yet and Jeannie was obviously the shy type.

"Hi," I opened cautiously.

"Hi," she answered suspiciously.

This, I could see, was getting us nowhere.

"You always hang out in a Scotch bottle?"

"Mostly," she said beginning to relax a little. "I have to stay there until I'm uncorked."

"You ever been uncorked before?"

Her eyes got all dreamy. "Yes."

I was beginning to get a little dreamy myself. "What happened?"

She frowned a little and said, "I don't remember."

I got the impression she was lying. I tried a different gambit. "Ever live in a lamp?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She was offended. "Me? In a smelly old lamp? Heavens no. My family is of the finest bottles. Of course—well there was uncle Charlie. He lived in an awful kerosene lantern." She blushed and then added, "but we never associated with him."

I had a sudden inspiration. "Then if you're a real genie, since I'm the one that uncorked you, you're my slave. You have to do anything I command."

"That's not so."

"What do you mean it's not so? It says so in all the books."

"Well," she said, thinking, "it's not entirely so."

"Aha!" I gloated. "Then I'm right." I thought about the possibilities and I think a gleam must have come into my eyes because she said quickly:

"You just get three."

"Three commands?"

She nodded.

With only three mystic goodies to play around with I suppose I should have given it more thought, but she looked so luscious sitting there with only her towel that I said, just like that, "Submit."

"Now?" she asked. And her eyes got all wide again.

"Now."

"You have to say the magic words."

"Which would be?"

"Mogen David."

"Huh?"

"The bottler had a sense of humor."

"Oh," I said with a stupid smile, "a clown."

She smiled too, but on her it wasn't stupid, and her towel slipped down a little.

"Mogen David," I said breathing hard, "submit."

Then those 100 proof eyes of hers got all fun-lovely and smoky amber, and she smiled some more and kind of sank back on the couch. Her hair fell around her shoulders in red brown waves and she let go of the towel.

I reached out for her and kissed her. Her lips were warm and soft and things were going well when all of a sudden she began to shrink.

"What in hell?" I yelled. But there she lay all naked on the couch and only eight, nine, inches tall.

She smiled again—it was definitely a wicked smile—and grew back to normal size.

"Where do you get off?" I questioned, "doing that."

She grabbed up her towel. "I submitted," she said all innocent again.

Then she started to cry. I mean, *she* started to cry. Can you beat that? And she said all teardrippy, "It's a sort of defense mechanism. You know—?"

I didn't know at all, but it shook me seeing her cry.

She wiped her eyes with the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

end of the towel and sniffing, said, "I can't help it. When I get commanded, it works to protect me."

She pouted her lovely lips and said, "I like you, Danny, I really do, but I just can't submit until —" She started to cry again. "Until I have Granny with me."

I didn't say anything. I mean, what could I say?

Jeannie daubed at her eyes again and said, "The poor old thing. She's all alone. She was evicted from her lovely Drambuie bottle and now she's living in a cheap wine jug at Shoermer's Delicatessen." She fluttered her lashes at me and said, "I just know everything will be all right when I have Granny out of there. Won't you help?"

I didn't have much choice. So I went to Shoermer's and got the jug. I recognized it by the blue cork that Jeannie said it would have.

I handed the jug to Jeannie and averted my eyes while she opened it, figuring that it might be disrespectful to watch the nude grandmother climb out and all.

I heard the cork come out with a little "thunk" and then next thing I heard was this deep male voice saying, "Baby," and Jeannie saying, "Harold, honey."

And there wasn't any grandmother at all.

Just this big naked guy prancing around my apartment, and Jeannie hanging onto his arm with a lovesick look in her eyes.

Then she looked at me and said sympathetically, "I'm sorry, Danny, it was a dirty trick. But I know you understand. Harold and I are in love."

And the big guy, Harold, laughed. I could tell that the love was one-sided, because Harold dripped lust and avarice. What he was after was not pure and wholesome.

"Jeannie," I cried, "you are blinded by this creature. He is not for you."

Harold helped himself to my bourbon and lit one of my cigarettes.

"It's no use," said Jeannie wistfully. "Harold and I are soul mates."

It kind of got to me, you know, —seeing Jeannie so stuck on this big oaf who was drinking my booze.

"Mogen David," I said to Harold, "get lost."

Harold poured himself another drink and Jeannie said, "It won't work. You didn't uncork him, I did, and commands are nontransferable."

"Two can play at this silly game," I told her sternly. "Mogen David. Put Harold back in the jug."

"O-o-oh!" she squealed and started to cry again, but she did it, and Harold got all vaporous looking and spewed back into his bottle. Jeannie cried a little more as she corked him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Jeannie, honey," I said trying to comfort her, "don't cry."

She shuddered a little, and as she did, Harold's bottle began to shimmy on the table. Then it began to shake and dance around and it split—right in two. Then there was this big naked guy prancing around my apartment again and Jeannie looking apologetic and talking about defense mechanisms and soul mates.

This was intolerable. I mean like it ripped me up. And now that big Harold crud had smashed his bottle and was leering at Jeannie's dimple. I looked at Jeannie who was looking at Harold.

"Who needs it?" I sneered. But it wasn't any use because I knew that I did, so I used my last command. "Mogen David. Love *me.*"

Jeannie still looked at Harold, but it was like he had come out from under a rock or something. Then she looked at me with her eyes getting all sleepy and said, "Danny, honey. Harold has got to go."

"If you say so," I said as casually as I could. "But what about his bottle?"

"He can use mine," she said. "I won't be needing it." Then she went up to Harold and whispered something to him. He glared at her, but then his frown faded—and so did Harold and he drifted into the Scotch bottle.

"Poor thing," said Jeannie corking him. "I know he'll be terribly cramped in there."

"Never mind. He'll adjust," I said, thinking how shook the owner of the Five O'Clock Club would be if I snaked the bottle back into his private stock and he uncorked Harold instead of some chick.

Then I forgot the practical joke because Jeannie was looking at me adoringly with those amber eyes and I began to feel warm inside. She said softly, "I love you, Danny."

And I said all mushy, "I love you too."

"My defense mechanism," she giggled. "You had to love me."

But I didn't mind at all.

I held her with one arm and kissed her, and with the other arm I pitched Harold into the trash basket.

And Jeannie smiled all sleepy eyed, and dropped her towel.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jane Beauclerk is the pseudonym of a poet whose poems "have been published here and there;" this is her first story sold. Says she, further, "I am divorced, have two children, a cat, and at present two principal ambitions. The first is to live in a real house on a few acres of real land; the second is to have a good many million dollars to make movies with." We are impressed with this story. It is inescapably and favorably reminiscent of our late contributor, Edward Moreton Drax Plunket, Baron Dunsany in the Peerage of Ireland—but whereas Lord Dunsany's stories were unmistakable Fantasy, this one is unmistakably Science Fiction. And, yet, withal, a Heroic-Romantic Adventure. We think there will be more of Miss Beauclerk on the pre-technical world of Apertia, its epic-rich people, and the potent and noble Stars who rule them; and you will want to think so, too.

WE SERVE THE STAR OF FREEDOM

by Jane Beauclerk

ALL NIGHT THEY SAT AROUND the campfire and talked. The strangers took much and gave little, so that by dawn they spoke the speech of Apertia, if badly, while their own language remained a thing hidden. Poal listened the more carefully for that.

"We come to trade," said the leader of the strangers. His hair was brown, his eyes and clothing blue.

"Indeed," said the rider of horses, looking up at the dawn. He turned to the others. "Friends and children, shall we move on?"

"Wait," said the blue-eyed stranger, and motioned. Some hurried to the vessel of the strangers. Another, in black clothing, drew Poal aside. "I take it from the way in which you listen," he said, "that you are an intelligent young man. Am I right?"

"You may be right," answered Poal. "It is your privilege."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The man nodded. "I am a historian," he said. "I wonder if anyone else understands the futility of this so well as I."

"How well do you understand it?" asked Poal.

"It is an old story," said the historian. "We open new markets, we make more goods. When the markets are glutted, or when they have learned to make goods for themselves, we must open others. It is futile."

"Why?" asked Poal.

"Because the universe is finite," said the historian, nodding.

Some returned from the vessel, bringing goods, and spread them before the rider of horses. "Here is jeweller's work," said the blue-eyed man, lifting a metal collar that sparkled darkly.

"Firelight lies," said the rider, and he trampled out the embers of the fire and lifted the collar in the clear light of dawn.

"Here is cloth," said the blue-eyed man. "Here are sticks that make fire. Here is soap. Here are weapons."

"It is bad policy," said the historian, "to introduce new weapons to inferior cultures."

"They are pretty things," said Paol.

"But not too durable," said the historian. "We need raw materials. We need ores. I see that you have a knife at your belt. Is it of a common metal?"

"Yes," he answered. "Steel."

The historian nodded. "Yes, now you are doomed," he said.

The rider of horses put down a strip of cloth, letting it slide between his fingers. "Friends and children," he said, "shall we move on?"

"It is day," said another. All rose, except Poal, and the rider went to his beasts.

"Wait," said the blue-eyed stranger hastily. "Let us trade."

"Why?" asked the oldest woman, who was mother to the rider of horses. "We have clothing and fire and weapons. What else do you offer?"

"This, and that, and these others," answered the man, and he spoke of the usefulness and the beauty and the value of the things. By the time he finished speaking, all had gone, except Poal.

"Can it be," asked the man, "that you think these things useless, or ugly, or of no value?"

"For five spans of this cloth," answered Poal, "the Star of Beauty would wade the three hundred seas. For this jewelled collar, the Star of Wealth would melt his golden house to make coins. For three of these fire sticks, the Star of Poetry would cut off three fingers of his left hand."

"I do not understand your talk of stars," said the man, "but I take it that you think highly of our goods. Why then will you not trade?"

"We serve the Star of Freedom,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

answered Poal. And he rose to follow his people.

It was near noon when the rider of horses, walking between his two beasts, began to speak lovingly of a little weapon the strangers had shown, that struck down game beyond the reach of arrows and more surely. "Such a thing has many uses," he said; "especially near the dominion of the Star of Battle." For they climbed the rising road toward the mountains of Org.

They fell into talk of this, some praising the weapon, some decrying the Star, some saying they should turn back and visit with the strangers. As they talked, something passed over them and landed in the road ahead.

"What is it?" asked one.

"A new flock of strangers," answered his cousin. "This time let them teach *us* a new tongue. I weary of the speech of Apertia." But indeed it was only the blue-eyed stranger and some few of his companions, come in a smaller vessel from their great vessel. The rider of horses met them with smiles.

"Perhaps, if you will not trade, you will lead us to others who will," said the blue-eyed man. "I put it to you frankly that we need iron ore."

"We have often noticed with annoyance," said the historian, "how nothing quite replaces iron ore."

"You are in luck, my friends," cried the rider of horses. And he offered one of his beasts to the blue-eyed stranger, saying, "Come, I will show you your luck."

But the stranger started back suspiciously. "Sit on an animal?" he said. "Follow you alone? What trick is this?"

"Come all in your vessel, then," answered the rider. "Indeed you will need it to carry the ore."

So it was settled, and the strangers and the rider of horses flew away in the strangers' vessel toward the abandoned mine in the next valley. The rider had found this mine only the year before, the very year it was given up for lack of safe transport, that valley lying very near the dominion of the Star of Battle. The others waited and slept, to make up for the night of talk around the campfire. Toward evening the vessel came again.

"You understand that we must test it further," the leader of the strangers was saying. His blue eyes shone like polished bird's eggs. "But if it is good, we will offer you, say, twenty spans of the flowered cloth—"

"Why?" asked the rider of horses. He had the look of a man who has seen marvels, and his feet gripped the firm earth lovingly, but he leaned his hand on the vessel's side as the winner of a race leans on his horse's neck. "What could we do with twenty spans of such cloth?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Trade it," answered the blue-eyed man. "I have heard it said that someone called the Star of Beauty would give much for such cloth."

The rider shrugged. "What is it to us if the Star of Beauty goes clothed in silver or in rags?" he said. "We serve the Star of Freedom."

"What will you take, then?" cried the man. "I put it to you frankly that we want this ore."

"Take it," said the rider. "I give it to you, to keep or use or lose as you will. Friends and children, shall we move on?"

"We have slept and are ready," said Poal, and he took a little weapon quietly from the belt of one of the strangers and put it into his sleeve.

So they moved on up the mountain road, leaving the strangers with open mouths. A little while later they saw the vessel lift and fly back toward the great vessel. "They do wisely to turn aside from the dominion of the Star of Battle," said one.

"More wisely than need is, almost," said his brother. "They have marvellous little weapons for certain, and marvellous large ones, at a guess."

The rider of horses sighed, as a man sighs who thinks of his beloved.

"Does this please you?" asked Paol, putting the stranger's weapon into his hand.

"It pleases me," answered the rider of horses, "as it happens."

"I give it to you, to keep or use or lose as you will," said Poal. Then they went on happy and singing.

Now the road branched, the one fork turning sharp along the outer slopes of the mountains, while the other ran up into the steep pass between the peaks of Org and Desolation. Some would have turned down the outer road, but the rider of horses mounted and trotted toward the pass. They sat and waited.

"Is he mad?" asked an old uncle. "We have never taken the pass. To take the pass would be to cross the dominion of the Star of Battle."

"Only a little rocky corner of it," answered Poal, who held the rider's second horse. "It would save us many barren miles and days."

"Our rider is not mad," said another. "He has the little weapon."

"Yes, yes," nodded the old uncle, "but the Star of Battle is the Star of Battle."

Then, when they had done talking, the rider of horses returned. "The road is wild but good enough," he said, "and the mountains full of game. Friends and children, shall we take the pass?"

Many were willing, but not all, and so they parted at the parting of the roads. The larger number, Poal among them, went on to-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ward the pass, but the others stayed a while by the roadside to choose a new rider for themselves. And the rider of horses gave them his second beast, that the new rider should not be ashamed.

The pass was narrow, with steep wooded walls, so that a few could have held it against unreasonable odds; but it was long years now since any had sought this entrance to the Star of Battle's dominion, and it stood unguarded. They crossed in the dusk, and came into a high valley among hills. There the rider of horses knocked down three of the beasts called lyo, and they made camp and feasted.

Before dawn they broke camp again, and were out of the hills by daylight. Now they followed a faded road through a rocky land, cut off from the rest of the Star of Battle's dominion by ragged ranges of bare stone. Halfway across it they were set upon by Lord Early and a force of twenty warriors, but the rider of horses knocked down three or four of them with the little weapon, and the rest passed on southward. That night they camped again among hills, and the next morning crossed the eastern spur of Craghead and came down into the fertile plain where the Star of Wealth had dominion.

Towns were set thick along the roads and rivers. In the first they were welcomed gladly, and a race was held. "Is it wisely done," grumbled the oldest woman, "to race a horse that has been hurried over rocks a day long, and gone without water, and been frightened with howling warriors? Is it done wisely?"

"Yes," answered the rider of horses, and he mounted and rode the race. Truth or luck was with him, for the town horse stumbled near the finish line and so lost to him by half a length.

"Camp here and be welcome," said the town rider sourly. So they camped. Some went about the town, giving and taking gifts; some took their ease in the sun, talking of the danger passed; and some went hunting in the fields, for the pleasure of seeing the rider of horses knock down birds with his little weapon.

"Strange that it never needs to be fitted with a new bolt," said one. "Doubtless it makes its own bolts."

"No," said Poal, who had listened more closely to the strangers' talk. "It carries many bolts, but in time all will be shot."

"Until then," said the rider of horses, knocking down a cluster of nuts from the top of a blyyo tree, "it is a pretty thing."

But when they came back to the camp they heard grumbling. "It is a sorry town," said one. "The people lock their houses against us; and what is worse, they lock their shops and stalls."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Gifts are hard to find," said the sons and little brothers that cared for the rider's beast. "We had to creep under the wall of the smithy, and that in broad daylight, to find nails for the horse's left hind shoe."

"This is a cheap thin welcome," said another, "and I for one will have none of it." Then many agreed and began to talk of moving on to another town; for their passage of the day before had made them proud, and they thought no welcome worthy of them.

"Well enough," said the rider of horses. "I am ready for another race." So they moved on, following a river eastward to another town, and there lost the race and were forced to move on again.

Now it drew on toward evening, and they were troubled to think that among so many towns they must shame themselves by sleeping in the fields. But they came to another town, and here Poal took the town rider's whip from his pocket a moment before the race, and they camped there that night and were all welcomed.

In the morning Poal rose early, with a great desire for turkey eggs, but the first yard of turkeys he found was guarded by a snarling hurus cat the size of a colt. "Take care, my kitten," said Poal. "If you purr too loud, you wake the people of the house." He scratched the beast's chin with a stick, and with another stick wound up the slack of its chain, and so jumped the fence and gathered a sleeveful of the little green eggs. He had turned to give the cat an egg, when something caught him in the ribs and wrapped around him.

"Thief;" cried a voice. "Corrupter of cats! Murderer of unhatched fowls!"

Poal unwound the weighted rope from around himself, being careful of his eggs, and turned. It was a woman who had struck him thus cowardly from behind, and now stood threatening him with a stick. She was very young, and pleasant to look at. Her hair was violet-colored, wreathed with yellow flowers, and her eyes stung him like serpents.

"Out," she said, "or I loose the cat on you. And first put down the eggs."

"I take them as your gift," he answered. "I am hungry."

She lowered the stick a little, and looked at him more patiently. "Whom do you serve?" she asked.

"My lord the Star of Freedom," answered Poal.

She put down the stick. "Take it for a gift," she said somewhat wearily. Then her eyes flashed. "But not to feed the hurus cat and corrupt it and breed in it a taste for eggs. Out, or I call my father!"

"I had it in my mind to give a gift this morning," said Poal, "and there was none to take it but your cat. Now there is another." And he held out the egg toward her.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Her lip quivered, with anger, it might be, or with laughter, and she took the egg. "Come then, corrupter of cats," she said, "and eat under our nut tree."

"Most call me Poal," he said, following her.

"All call me Lorn," said the woman, over her shoulder.

"Not I," answered Poal. "I call you a pleasure to the eye and a blessing to the heart."

So they ate.

"Friends and children," said the rider of horses, in due time, "shall we move on?"

"I shall not," said Poal. And he told his reasons.

"Is this wisely done," cried the rider of horses, "to part from your people and lie alone in a town among townsfolk, to be one free man among these servants of the Star of Wealth, to live at risk and without law, and all for the sake of a merchant's daughter? Is this done wisely, my son?"

"Yes," answered Poal.

"Take this, then," said the rider, putting the little weapon into his hand. "I give it to you, to keep or use or lose as you will."

When the rider and his people had gone, Poal came to the merchant and told him of the matter. The merchant laughed in his face. Poal laughed also.

"Why do you laugh?" grunted the merchant.

"Why not?" asked Poal. And he played with the little weapon at his belt.

"You wear a strange thing at your belt," said the merchant. "What is it?"

"It is a weapon that can pick a flower bud from the topmost branch of a blyyo tree at four bowshots distance," answered Poal.

"And where did you get it?" asked the merchant, whose eyes were bright like a sick bird's.

"From a trader, beyond the dominion of the Star of Battle," he answered.

"So?" said the merchant. "Leave me the weapon as security, and take six horses loaded with iron ore, and go trading into the dominion of the Star of Battle. If you return with sufficient profit, and within four months, the girl is yours."

"Take the weapon," said Poal.

So it was settled, and before dawn of a rainy morning Poal set out, leading six horses loaded with ore. As he passed the merchant's house the woman Lorn came whispering to him, and put the strangers' weapon into his sleeve. Then he walked on singing.

A few days he journeyed thus slowly beside the boat-thick river, for his heart was easy and the walking good. But when he came to the slopes of Craghead he cut loose one of the horses and divided its load among the others. "Now come, my pretty," said Poal. "I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shall be my own rider of horses." And he mounted and rode singing up the slope.

But when he topped the spur and looked down on the wild hills and the roll of stony desert beyond, his song died on the air, for he saw the flash of battle far off at the horizon. He thought diligently of the woman Lorn, and he watered his horses and knocked down a pair of flying rabbits for his meal.

In the last valley he tethered the loaded beasts, and rode to the top of a hill. He saw battle below him. Where two rock walls ran out from the labyrinthine ranges on his left hand, a troop of horsemen had penned a larger force within the stone V. "Well, they will need iron," thought Poal. "They are wearing swords out fast." But then there came a lull in the battle and he saw that what the besieged warriors held as their barricade was the great vessel of the strangers. "Come, my pretty beast," said Poal. "We must see this." And he rode down to the fighting.

When he had come near to the horsemen they turned and set upon him, but he threw away his knife and rode forward empty-handed, so that he got no more than a bruise and a cut.

"Who commands here?" he asked, when they had put up their swords, seeing that they would get no fighting from him.

"Lord Bromon," they answered.

"Tell him that one comes who serves the Star of Freedom," said Poal.

"Surely we guessed as much from your valiant defense," they said, and mocked him greatly. But they brought him to Lord Bromon, a huge stubborn man of much strength, who looked on him scornfully and kindly. He spoke to his surgeons, saying, "Heal his hurt"; and to Poal, "How can I please you?"

"Give me safe passage, My Lord," answered Poal. "My road lies that way." And he pointed toward the vessel of the strangers.

"What?" cried Lord Bromon. "Do you serve Lord Early?"

"I serve the Star of Freedom," answered Poal. "I met Lord Early not long ago, and the meeting was not friendly."

"Go then," said Lord Bromon, who kept one eye always on the camp of his enemy. "But if you are Lord Early's spy, you deserve what Lord Early will do to you."

Then Poal, whose cut the surgeons had dressed, rode on into the V of the rock walls. He saw how the crossbows that lined the top of the vessel turned to follow him, and so he flung wide his arms and let the horse amble at its own will. They let him pass around the end of the vessel, and held him pinned in the sights of a crossbow while Lord Early came to him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You are a man of Lord Bromon's," said Lord Early, looking at him, "or one of those wanderers with the strange weapon, or it may be both, and in any case you are my enemy. But you come unarmed. How can I please you?"

"I serve only the Star of Freedom," said Poal, "and I come peacefully, but it is true that I have an uncommon weapon." He showed it.

Lord Early's brow darkened. "What is this weapon?" he asked.

"Stand with it on the peak of Craghead, My Lord," answered Poal, "and you can strike down a man riding from Black Harbor to the sea."

"It is a foul weapon," said Lord Early. "Take it from my sight."

"Gladly, My Lord," he answered, "if I may go into this vessel."

Lord Early shrugged. "Go into this boulder, if you will. Doubtless the vessel has a door, but there is no sign hung over it."

Poal looked down the long metal side of the vessel, and saw that this was true. "How did you come to barricade yourself behind the thing, My Lord?" he asked.

"I was marching down from the Ranges of Bewilderment, in hope of cutting off Lord Fadzal and his bowmen, when I saw this thing drop from the sky, and men come out of it," said Lord Early. "I offered them battle, but they fled into the vessel again and closed it. Then came Bromon and his wild horsemen, and I had no time to move out." He shrugged. "That was six days ago. I have thrown up earthworks, as you see, and built the thing into a tolerable fortification. But we are eating our shoes now, and in a few days more we will be drinking blood."

"It grieves me," said Poal. He went to where he saw a little seam in the vessel's side, and kicked against it. "It is I, Poal, a friend and trader," he shouted in the speech of Apertia.

In due time the door of the vessel opened, and Poal dismounted and went in. It was a marvel above all marvels. "Sit down quickly," said the historian. "You look dizzy."

Poal sat down and looked at the slick walls and stiff floor and the strange things on them. In boxes the color of ice he saw the goods the strangers had offered for trade to his people, and he thought of the woman Lorn and his eyes flashed. "How can I please you?" he asked.

The blue-eyed leader of the strangers snorted. "Take these madmen away," he said. "We had no more than landed when they attacked us. We could crush them as quickly as you close your hand; but that would be to create hostility. An opening market must be treated with care and indulgence."

"Therefore we carefully and in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dulgently withdrew," added the historian. "We would have withdrawn farther, but suddenly we found ourselves being used as a barricade. I judge that you are in a state of more than feudal anarchy, and I fear that you will prove a doubtful market."

"If we should rise now," said the blue-eyed man, "our rising would shake these pestilential brawlers like ants in a churn. And that is not the way to treat a market."

Poal looked long at the shining cloth, at the gleam of strange metal and the changing fire of strange jewels. "Let me out," he said, "and I will send them away."

"That is unlikely," said the historian, "and probably impossible." But they let him out.

He came out under the hoofs of the warhorse of Lord Bromon, who had grown tired of the siege and led a flying attack on one end of the barricade. "Safe passage!" cried Poal, rolling on one side. He spent some bad minutes crouched against the vessel; and indeed he might have called again to the strangers, had he not had still the taste of his boast in his mouth. But in due time the attack was beaten off, and Lord Bromon wounded with a great swashing blow of Lord Early's mace. Then Poal caught his horse, and rode safe through the lines and back to the hills under Craghead. The five horses stood tethered by a stream, and he loosed them and led them down toward the vessel. "Step neatly, my joys," he told them. "We may have a larger load to carry back, if only I can think of something." He took the little weapon and aimed it at a flying rabbit. Nothing happened. He aimed it at a rock under his horse's feet. Nothing happened. "The bolts are shot," he said.

Then he thought of something, and led his horses into a fold of the rocks. When he had tethered them, he rode down again to the camp of Lord Bromon.

Lord Bromon sat stiff-faced on a stone while his surgeons toiled at his wounded shoulder. "It grieves me, My Lord," said Poal. "Pity that you had not my weapon."

"What is this weapon?" asked Lord Bromon, whose face was as the stone face of a cliff in the moment before an avalanche.

"Stand with it on the plain, My Lord, and you could strike down the soaring carrion bird, if only it did not fly too high to be seen," answered Poal. "With this weapon, My Lord, you may kill a man as easily as look at him, as a serpent strikes or a spider snares. With this weapon—"

"You may live among spiders and serpents if you will," roared Lord Bromon. "It is not fit for a man's use." He struck his fist against the stone, and his surgeons wept. " I let you live, friend, because you are an outlander and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a man of no account. But if any who serves my lord the Star of Battle dared stoop for such a weapon, honor would melt like snow on red-hot iron, and war and glory perish, and good battles come no more. Take the thing from my sight!"

Then Poal rode a little way off and called to a warrior of Lord Bromon's. The man came, scowling and leaning on his spear.

"Tell me, friend, where I am most likely to meet with Lord Gorgro," said Poal.

"Beyond the Ranges of Bewilderment," answered the man. "Good journey to you. Though why an outlander and a man of no courage should seek a meeting with Lord Gorgro is more than I know."

"It is true that I am an outlander," said Poal. "But long ago I contracted with that lord to bring him a certain little weapon." And he rode away hastily toward the ranges.

The warrior looked after him and turned then to Lord Bromon, and shortly Poal heard a great cry and a noise of mounting. He hurried into a cleft of the rocks, where a dry streambed came down from the mountains, and there he dropped from his horse and struck the beast across the flanks, so that it leaped forward and galloped up the streambed with a great clatter. Then he crept behind a boulder and waited until the horse was out of sight, and Lord Bromon and his warriors had come angrily in pursuit and passed up into the ranges, scattering stones from their horses' hoofs. Then Poal slipped the weapon into his sleeve and came down to Lord Early.

"It is trickery," said Lord Early, who stood with drawn sword beside the vessel. "Bromon is not so much a coward as to flee without reason."

"That," said Poal, brushing the dust from his garments, "is not flight, My Lord, and he has reason. He has also my weapon."

"What?" cried Lord Early. "To arms, my men! After the scoundrel! We shall die bravely, at least." And they gathered their weapons and marched away into the Ranges of Bewilderment, before Poal could unfold the story he had prepared to send them there. So he shrugged, and went back to his five horses.

By the time he had led them down to the scene of the siege, the strangers were standing with puzzled faces around their vessel.

"How did you do it?" asked the blue-eyed man.

"It was nothing," said Poal. "Some are chasing others, and those are chasing me."

"This is what is known as strategy," said the historian, nodding.

"How can we reward you?" asked the blue-eyed man.

Poal shook his head. "It is not a matter for reward," he answered.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"But it would please me to have some of those goods you carry in the vessel."

Then goods were brought out and heaped up, and after some trials at loading his five horses Poal cast off the sacks of ore and hung the strange goods in their place. His heart was warm. "Take this for a gift," he said to the leader of the strangers, and he gave him the little weapon from his sleeve. The man said nothing.

Then Poal turned back toward Craghead and the plain and the woman Lorn.

The merchant gave him great welcome, with a bright feast and all the merchants of the town nodding in wonder at his goods. But that was after the woman Lorn had met him at her father's gate and led him with torchlight and shouting to her father's chamber, for the merchant had not looked for him so soon. And within a few days they were married.

"I will make a poor husband for a merchant's daughter," Poal told her privately, "and a poor townsman. I had rather give than sell, and I have never learned to buy. I have served none but the Star of Freedom, and him I have served so well that not even his dominion could hold me."

"I am sick of buying and selling," answered Lorn. "I am sick of the town. The Star of Wealth has no dominion over me, for dominion is of the heart. Let us leave this place and seek your people. Let us serve only the Star of Freedom and the Star of Love." So it was settled between them.

But when the marrying was done, the merchant called Poal aside. "You are an outlander," he said, "and you are young, but plainly you have skill." And he gave him half share in his merchandising.

Poal told this privately to his wife, and when he saw the look of her face he clenched his hands upon his heart. "Oh, it was not done wisely," she said, "and I have married a fool and an outlander and a man not worthy to serve the Star of Freedom or the Star of Love."

"But a gift!" said Poal. "He gave it as a gift. What could I do but take it?"

"And now we are bound," said Lorn. "How can we free ourselves from wealth?" And she pressed her violet hair upon her eyes.

"My joy and my hope of pleasure," answered Poal, "it is true that I am a fool; but what could I do?"

"You must not waste your time in grieving," she said. "You must be a good merchant, and it is my father you must please now, not me."

So Poal went to the merchant's shop and sat there all the morning, but the merchandising smile came hard to his face.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Toward noon the great vessel of the strangers landed beside the outer quay of the harbor, and the strangers came into the town. They came with hopeful faces, though somewhat uncertain, and with more goods in little running carts. Poal left the merchant's shop and went to meet them.

"What strategy is this?" asked the historian. "Wherever we go, you are before us, and unexpected things happen."

"It may be that the Stars who have dominion over all have brought this about," answered Poal. "How can I please you, my friends?"

"We come to trade," said the blue-eyed man, who looked around him nervously. "It would please me to know that there were neither wanderers nor warriors in this town."

"There are none but merchants," said Poal sadly, with a merchandising smile. "Let us trade." And he led them to the shop of Lorn's father. Nothing pleased them, except three sacks of diamonds. "For these jewels," they said eagerly, "we will give you this and that." And they showed their goods.

"But these are only rough diamonds," said Poal, "small diamonds, flawed ill-colored diamonds, the scrapings of the mines."

"These diamonds please us best," they answered him.

"Take them, then," cried Poal. "Surely your pleasures are strange," And he gave them the sacks.

When the merchant came, puffing with eagerness to see the strangers, the strangers had gone on to other shops. "What did you get from them?" he asked.

"Nothing," answered Poal, and he told of the diamonds. Then the merchant was angry.

"But why should I take from them what I do not want?" asked Poal. "I mean them nothing but good."

"I too," said the merchant. "Hear me, young outlander. It is not good for a man to have too much joy or too much pain. When you give him something he wants, you must balance his joy by taking something else from him. This is what is known as mutual profit. But I see that you are a fool, and I was a fool to trust you." Then he cursed him.

Now Poal walked down very sadly to the outer quay and saw the Star of Wealth come to land from a great ship. The sails of the ship were colored like the gold of sunsets, and the Star walked in golden shoes. He came up from the quay, to where Poal stood beside the strangers' vessel, and there he stopped.

"What is this thing?" asked the Star. He was a tall man and very thin, with some beauty and much grace. Poal bowed before him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It is a vessel, My Lord," he answered.

"It is a marvel," said the Star of Wealth. "It would please me to own it."

Poal thought of his wife Lorn, and of her father. "I will sell it to you, then," he said.

"Is it yours to sell?" asked the Star.

"I think you cannot buy it from any other, My Lord," he answered.

"What is your price?" asked the Star.

Poal looked upward from the golden shoes. "The sapphires that you wear, My Lord," he answered.

"That is a great price," said the Star of Wealth, "but I will pay it." And he took the twenty star sapphires that he wore on twenty silver chains about his arms, and gave them to Poal. Then he called his men, and with much labor and the use of derricks they got the vessel down the quay and onto the ship.

Poal sat and watched them. It was past sunset when the work was finished, and the ship set sail at once with an offshore breeze. Poal jingled his sapphires and went to find his wife.

He found the strangers instead, and they were troubled. The news of their vessel's going had run up through the town and reached them at last where they were trading eagerly with the town's merchants. Now they came running to the outer quay, and stood there open-mouthed and with grim eyes. They saw the great ship standing out to sea, dull gold in the twilight, with the great vessel silver on her deck.

"Send after it," cried the blue-eyed man, and clutched at his hair.

"It is the ship of our lord the Star of Wealth," the townsfolk answered. "What he buys is bought."

IT'S CORRECT TO CLIP!

Filling in the coupon on the next page offers the following advantages:

1. **Guaranteed monthly delivery to your door of the best in science fiction and fantasy reading.**
2. **Reduced rate—it's cheaper to subscribe than to buy your copies at the newsstand.**
3. **An essentially unmarred copy of this issue—the coupon is backed up with this box, and its removal does not affect the text of the surrounding material.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And they looked somewhat threateningly on the strangers.

"Then we are lost," said the strangers. Some wept. Some tightened their mouths like the necks of moneybags. Some turned in anger on the townsfolk. Only the blue-eyed man still said, "We must send after it. Where will he land?"

"At Seacape, most likely," they answered. "It is a troublesome journey."

"But how did he come to take our vessel? Who sold it to him?" cried the blue-eyed man. Poal drew him quickly aside.

"It is a troublesome journey, my friend," said Poal, "and it may be the ship will sink. Stay here and trade among these merchants. They delight in trade."

The man looked at him, saying nothing.

"I have it in my mind to give a gift," said Poal. "Take all my merchandise, to keep or use or lose as you will. Share it among you."

Now a strange light woke in the man's blue eyes, like dawn over a waking town. He turned from the quay slowly and followed Poal back toward the merchant's shop, and all the strangers followed after.

So in due time all was agreed. Nothing would satisfy the strangers but that a contract should be written out in the language of Apertia, and witnessed and signed and sealed, delivering all Poal's merchandise to them jointly and severally. Then Poal spoke privately with his wife, and in the darkness they left that town, walking quickly. At dawn they stopped and took a horse from a farmer's field, and rode on. But out of gladness they gave their sapphires to the farmer's little daughter whom they found herding turkeys, all but the one sapphire that Lorn wore about her wrist.

Mercury Press, Inc., 347 East 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10022 F-7

Send me The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION.

I enclose ☐ $4.50 for one year ☐ $11.00 for three years.

Name .....
Please print

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip # .....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MAGAZINE OF Fantasy and Science Fiction

MARKET PLACE

BOOKS—MAGAZINES

Why buy books? Send 10¢ for information & catalog to: Science Fiction Circulating Library, P. O. Box 1308, So. San Gabriel, California.

Locate any book. Aardvark Fantasy, Box 1749, Orlando, Fla. 32802.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW contains concise, timely reviews of science fiction books, magazines, and paperbacks. Includes articles by Leinster, Norton, Anderson, Carnell, etc. Send for free sample copy. Box 1568, San Diego, California 92112.

Science Fiction Magazines, Astounding, Amazing, Wonder, others 1930's. Carl Coots, Waverly, N.Y. 14892.

Don't let them take YOU! Read HOW TO COLLECT AS MUCH MONEY AS POSSIBLE FROM INSURANCE COMPANIES and learn how a claimant took THEM. Crazy method but it worked. We're still laughing. You'll laugh too! Send $2.88 for hard-cover edition to Ohio Publishing Co. 6511 Bramble Avenue, Cincinnati 45227. Ohioans add 9¢ tax, unfortunately.

25,000 magazines for sale. Thousands wanted in excellent condition; science fiction, weird, horror, spicy, western, adventure, others. Send list, enclosing stamp. Magazine Center, Box 214, Little Rock, Ark.

For immediate Release: "OFF-THE-BEATEN-PATH"—$2.00. R. Therrien, 2250 W. 130th Avenue, San Leandro, Calif.

BOOKS—The Surreal & Bizarre! Sadism! Masochism! Vampirism & Lycanthropy! Extended lists now available. Summerfare, Associated, Box 37, Vista, California.

MIRIFIC: newest fanzine, SF, fantasy, fact. . . . Send 35¢—1665 Johnson Avenue, Elmont, N.Y., 11003.

164 Astounding Dec. 46 to Feb. 63 $50.00; 91 Galaxy Mar. 51 to Oct. 59 $25.00; 136 F&SF Dec. 51 to Dec. 63 $40.00. R. Lowe, 2614 N. Springfield, Chicago 47, Ill.

Large Science Fiction Collection. Midshipman John Buckelew, Room 6224, BH, USNA, Annapolis, Md.

Fantasy and science fiction: out of print, rare, first editions—a distinguished catalogue sent upon request. Albatross Books, PO Box 123, Hollywood 28, Calif.

SEND ONLY $2.00 for 12 different magazines on magic tricks. Will include 22-page catalogue of magical literature free. Satisfaction guaranteed. Anthony VanderLinden, Desk FS, Oyster Bay, N. Y. 11771.

TRADE MAGAZINES! Send me 6 SF mags—receive 4 different. D. Jenkins, West Lafayette, Ohio.

EDUCATIONAL

LOVE, WORK AND KNOWLEDGE—their definition is the goal of our school and summer camp. Coeducational. Four to Eighteen. SUMMERLANE, Mileses 5, New York.

HYPNOTISM

Free Illustrated, Hypnotism Catalogue. Write Powers, 8721 Sunset, Hollywood 69, California.

LEARN WHILE ASLEEP, Hypnotize with your recorder, phonograph. Astonishing details, sensational catalog free. Sleep-learning Research Association, Box 24-FS, Olympia, Washington.

PATENTS AND INVENTIONS

PATENT SEARCHERS, $6.00! Free "Invention Record". Information. Miss Hayward, 1029 Vermont, Washington 5, D.C.

INVENTIONS wanted. Patented, unpatented. Extensive manufacturers lists. Search service. Applications prepared. Financial assistance available. For free details write New York Invention Service, 141 Broadway, Room 817, New York 6, New York.

Do you have something to advertise to sf readers? Books, magazines, typewriters, telescopes, computers, space-drives, or misc. Use the F&SF Market Place at these low, low rates: $2.50 for minimum of ten (10) words, plus 25¢ for each additional word. Send copy and remittance to: Adv. Dept., Fantasy and Science Fiction, 347 East 53 Street, New York 22, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PERSONALS

ELECTRONICS ENGINEER, 30, seeks Right Girl—just, not righteous; ambitious, not grasping; reverent, not religious; merciful. Box 1901, Annapolis, Md.

SERVICES—AUTHORS

WRITERS WANTED! Leading Agency seeks books, stories, articles for sale to top paying publishers! All subjects, lengths! Mail scripts today for prompt sales actions: CARLSON WADE LITERARY AGENCY, 475 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, New York.

POEMS WANTED for musical setting and recording. Send poems. Free examination. Crown Music, 49-FS West 32, New York 1.

STAMPS

GOOD APPROVALS at FAIR PRICES. STAMPS, Box 711, Belmont, Calif.

25 LARGE AMERICAN COMMEMORATIVES 10¢. Accompanying approvals. Free Perforation Gauge. LINSTAMPS, St. Catharines 147, Ontario.

307 WORLDWIDE Different 25¢. Sensational approvals. NIAGARA STAMPS, St. Catharines 247, Ontario.

90,000 STAMPS SALE! Bargain lot: sets, packets, pictorials $1.00. Large assortment $2.00. High value packet $3.00. Literature and 52 stamps 5 cts. Persile, 436 N. Y. Ave. Brooklyn 25, N. Y.

WANTED TO BUY

Doc Savage Magazines wanted. Certain months of years 1933, 1934, 1935. Write Tobiska, 14737 Arrow, Fontana, Calif.

COMIC BOOKS, 25¢—$1.00 each for pre-1950, any number. SEULING, 2881 W. 12, Brooklyn 24, N. Y.

MISCELLANEOUS

FULL COLOR COVERS of Fantasy and Science Fiction without overprinting—suitable for framing—75¢ for one; $2.00 for three; $3.00 for six; $15.00 for thirty-three. Our selection. Send order and remittance to: Mercury Press, Inc., Box 271, Rockville Centre, N.Y.

BEER, ALE, LIQUORS, WINES! Strongest Methods! $2.00. (Supplies, Hydrometer, Saccharometer Price List Included.). Research Enterprises, 29-MO8 Samoset Road, Woburn, Mass.

GROW LUXURIANT HAIR! Banish graying—Naturally Proven European methods. $2.—"Marco", 24 John St., N., Hamilton, Canada.

Stretch to health, ideal for everyone. A few minutes a day to strengthen muscles. Complete with chart and insructions. $3.98. J. L. Hazenstab, 162 Beechwood Drive, Youngstown 12, Ohio.

Smo-Cloud-Bug Killer, Simply light and a clean white cloud penetrates into cracks, crevices and other places bugs hide. $1.98, J. L. Hazenstab, 162 Beechwood Drive, Youngstown 12, Ohio.

SCIENTIFIC HANDWRITING ANALYSIS! Have you space-age personality, dynamics? Your handwriting reveals your "Goods" and "bads". For evaluation, send $3.00. Graphlab, Box 12-J, Olympia, Washington.

FOREIGN editions of The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION—few sample copies of each edition are available at 50¢ each—British, French, German, Italian. Send remittance to F&SF-Box 271, Rockville Centre, N.Y., 11570.

YOUR MARKET PLACE

A market is people—alert, intelligent, active people.

Here you can reach 156,000 people (averaging three readers per copy—52,000 paid circulation). Many of them are enthusiastic hobbyists—collecting books, magazines, stamps, coins, model rockets, etc.—actively interested in photography, music, astronomy, painting, sculpture, electronics.

If you have a product or service of merit, tell them about it. The price is right: $2.50 for a minimum of ten (10) words, plus 25¢ for each additional word.

Advertising Dept., Fantasy & Science Fiction

347 East 53 St., New York, N. Y. 10022

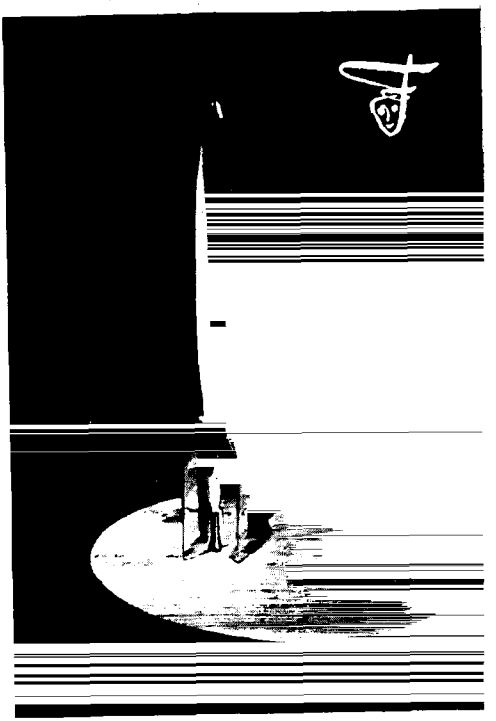
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A MERCURY PUBLICATION

The Magazine of FANTASY and SCIENCE FICTION has been awarded the *HUGO* as the world's best science fiction magazine. The award was made by the 21st World Science Fiction Convention, held in Washington, D. C. This is the fourth time this magazine has been so honored, previous awards having been made in 1958, 1959 and 1960. We are also pleased to report that a special *HUGO* was awarded to F&SF Science Editor Isaac Asimov for "putting the science in science fiction."

We think that science fiction and fantasy fiction have come to occupy a respected position in the spectrum of literature. Perhaps because they have come to represent not the triumph of imagination over reality, but rather a commingling of the two. Yet this remains a unique field, free of many of the fetters of contemporary fiction. F&SF is proud to be a leader in the field. However, the purpose of this magazine, first and foremost, is to entertain. It is gratifying to receive awards, but we are well aware that a past honor is not a guarantee of future excellence. We propose to continue to bring you the freshest, most stimulating entertainment in the field.

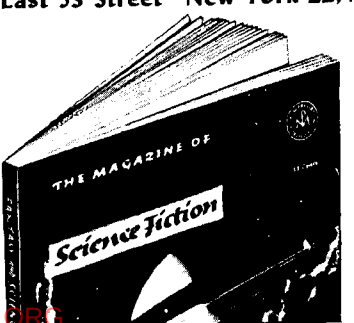


"... The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION consistently publishes more stories of high quality than any other science fiction magazine in the world."
NEW YORK TIMES Book Review

40c at better newsstands every month

By subscription $4.50 a year

347 East 53 Street New York 22, N. Y



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED